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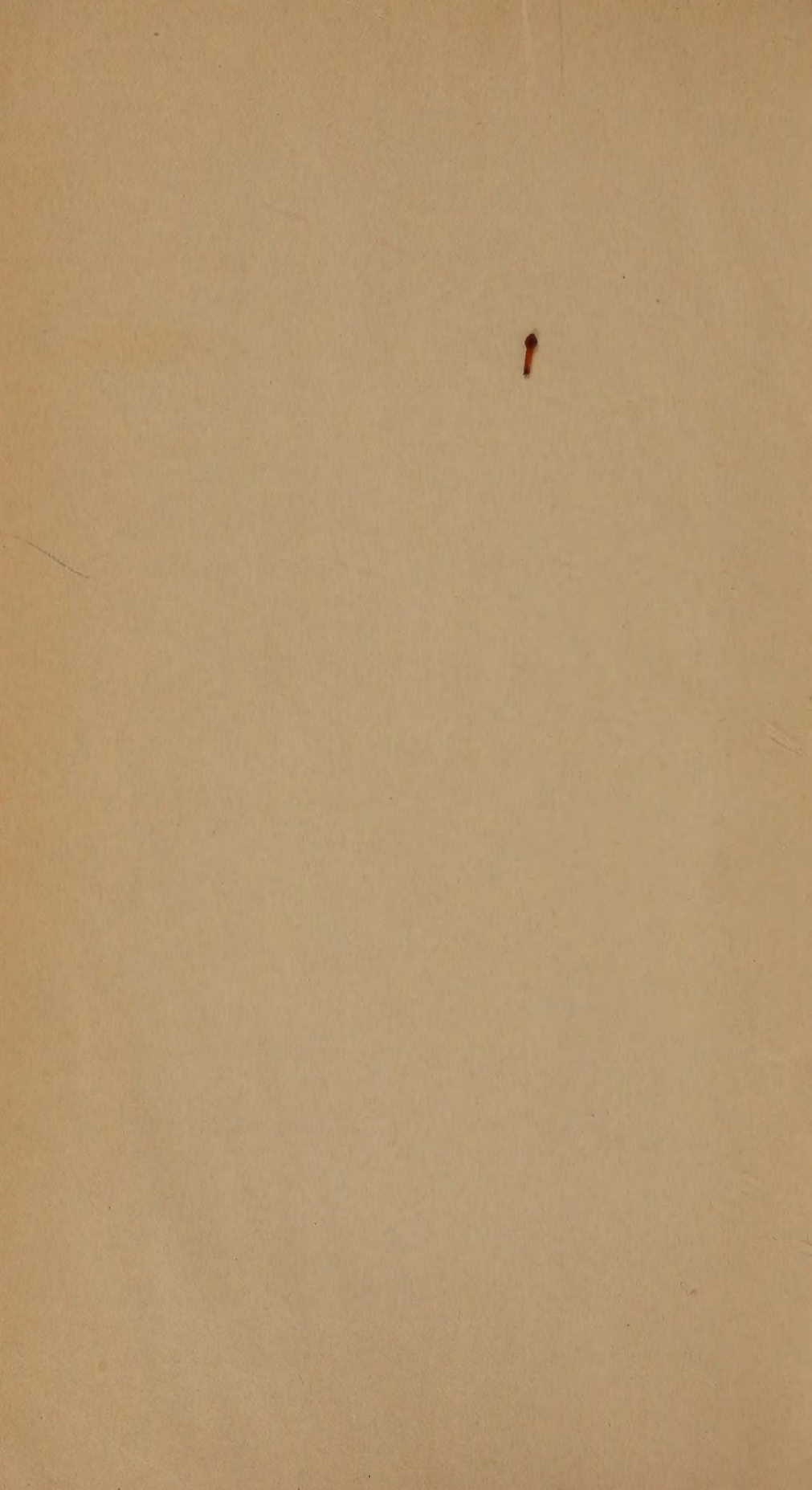
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THE MARRIAGES

OF

THE BOURBONS.

BY

CAPTAIN THE HON. D. BINGHAM.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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ERRATA.

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Page 107, line 19, *for* Louis XV. *read* Louis XIV.

MARRIAGES OF THE BOURBONS.

CHAPTER I.

MADAME DE MONTESPAN.

MADAME DE MONTESPAN, who replaced Mademoiselle de la Vallière in the affections of the *Grand Monarque*, deserves some notice, though she played no political part. She was born in 1641, and was the daughter of Gabriel de Rochehouart, first Duc de Mortemart. In 1663 she married the Marquis de Montespan, and not long afterwards was appointed lady-in-waiting to the queen. Madame de Sévigné tells us that she was surprisingly beautiful, that she was highly cultivated, and that she inherited all the proverbial wit of the Mortemarts—a wit not wholly devoid of sting. She was soon on friendly terms with the favourite, who, unable always to amuse the king, encouraged her visits. Louis, who was naturally of a fickle disposition, and who conceived a great admiration for her conversational powers, was not long in falling in love with the beautiful and brilliant Marquise de Montespan,

whose religious sentiments and strict virtue are said, at this period, to have captivated the queen.

It appears that in 1668, when the king went campaigning, and marched against Lilles, the Duchesse de la Vallière followed him without orders, and when the Marquise de Montespan, who was in the carriage with Marie Thérèse, saw her, she exclaimed that if ever she should have the misfortune of becoming the mistress of his Majesty, she would hide herself for life. And yet at this time, if we are to believe Mademoiselle de Montpensier, she was according secret interviews to Louis XIV.

The Marquis de Montespan appears to have shown his anger in the most vehement manner when he learned that his wife had become the mistress of the king, and the consequence was, that he was exiled to his estates, where, much to the wrath of Louis XIV., he used to drive about the country in a mourning-coach. It is pleasant to find how Mademoiselle de Montpensier was unable to understand the anger of the bereaved Marquis. She writes of him—"M. de Montespan, who is a very extravagant man, and little satisfied with his wife, 'unchaining himself extremely' on the friendship which he says that the king bears his wife, goes from house to house, telling the most ridiculous tales. One day he spoke to me on the subject, and I washed his head for him.¹ I had more right to do this than any one else, because he is a relation of mine. I made him understand that he

¹ Scolded him.

behaved badly when, speaking of his woes, he mixed up the king's name with quotations from the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers. He is intelligent, but has little judgment. He wished me to tell the king that on the last day God would reproach him with having taken his wife away from him."

The poor Marquis would have been more to be pitied, while driving about at the foot of the Pyrenees with all the trappings of woe, if he had not accepted £8000 from the co-respondent to pay his debts. Father Annat, the king's confessor, exhibited more firmness. He had shown himself indulgent on the subject of the criminal intercourse between his Majesty and Mademoiselle de la Vallière, which constituted the more venial crime of simple adultery. But he could not tolerate double adultery, and in order that the king should be able to obtain absolution, and to receive the sacraments, his most Christian Majesty had to change his confessor, taking first Father Ferrier and then Father La Chaise, who were less severe.

It was in 1670 that the *liaison* of Louis XIV. with the Marquise de Montespan became public. During a voyage taken by the Court to see *Madame* off to England on a mission to her brother Charles II., the Marquise rode part of the way with the queen in the king's carriage, and when she rode in her own carriage she was escorted by four of the body-guard.

Several children were the fruit of this double adultery; two were not only legitimized, but declared capable of ascending the throne in default of legiti-

mate heirs. As both Louis XIV. and his mistress were anxious that the birth of these children should be kept secret, they were confided by the Marquise de Montespan to her friend Madame Scarron, who was thus brought into contact with the king, by the woman she was destined to supplant, as the Marquise de Montespan had herself been introduced by her predecessor in the affections of his Majesty.

The *liaison* between Louis XIV. and the Marquise de Montespan lasted some twenty years ; but in 1675 the king commenced to feel some qualms of conscience, and to think of amending his wicked ways.

At the Jubilee of 1676, it appears that the two lovers, ill at ease in mind, separated in good faith, at least so they thought. Madame de Montespan went to Paris, visited the churches, fasted, prayed, and wept over her sins. On his side the king behaved like a good Christian. After the Jubilee it became a question as to whether Madame de Montespan should return to Court. Her friends and relations, even the most virtuous, asked why not ? By right of the appointment she held, and by right of birth, she was entitled to return, and she might return and live an irreproachable life. The Bishop of Meaux was of this opinion. There was some difficulty in settling details, but at last it was decided that the king should call and see Madame de Montespan in presence of the most respectable ladies of the Court. The interview took place, the king drew Madame de Montespan into the embrasure

of the window; they spoke to each other in a low voice, wept, and then making a profound reverence to the venerable matrons withdrew into another room!

Madame de Sévigné, writing on the 29th July, 1676, said—"At three o'clock the king, the queen, *Monsieur, Madame, Mademoiselle*, all the princes and princesses, Madame de Montespan, in fact all that can be called the Court of France, were assembled in the splendid apartment of the king which you know"—where a good deal of high play went on. Several persons appeared to have urged his Majesty to amend his ways and to live clean, no one more ardently than Madame Scarron, in whose conversation Louis XIV. was beginning to delight. Alas! while the Marquise de Montespan and Madame Scarron were disputing the heart of the king, and while Louis himself was thinking of repentance, he fell in love with Mademoiselle de Fontanges. The young lady had a son, was made a duchess, but did not survive the royal favour much more than a year. Before her death, observes Voltaire, the heart of the king was shared at the same time between Madame de Montespan, whom he could not quit, Mademoiselle de Fontanges, with whom he was in love, and Madame de Maintenon, whose conversation had become necessary to his troubled mind.

It is possible that Louis XIV. might have reinstated the Marquise de Montespan in favour, but for the indecent joy she exhibited on the death of her youthful rival. This completely alienated the already

waning affection of the monarch, and cleared the field for Madame Scarron. It was all in vain that she imitated the Duchesse de la Vallière, and retired for a while to a convent. Louis XIV. was no longer the ardent lover who had delivered "Sister Louise" from the Carmelites. Several times she had visited the Duchesse de la Vallière in her distress in quest of consolation. She had asked the duchess if it were true that she was happy—"not happy was the answer, but contented." As the Marquise de Montespan remained at Court, to the great annoyance of the king, and still held the post of superintendent of the queen's household, although the queen was dead, Louis XIV. at length sent a message to her ordering her to retire—message conveyed to her through her eldest son, the Duc de Maine! Upon this the ex-favourite took refuge in the Convent of St. Joseph, and acting on the advice of Father La Tour, wrote a humble letter to her husband, placing herself entirely at his disposal. A separation had been pronounced by the Châtelet of Paris in 1676; it was now 1691. The marquis refused to have anything whatever to say to his guilty wife, who passed the remainder of her days in the most exemplary manner, bestowing nearly all her goods on the poor; trying to atone for the errors of the past by good works. In 1703, she died at the age of seventy years, having up to the last preserved her marvellous beauty. She has left behind her the character of a woman of a somewhat imperious dis-

position, but not naturally depraved or perverse. She had the misfortune at the same time to be courted by a powerful and insinuating king, and to have had at the same time a husband who ill-treated her. One of her biographers (Deprès) praises her good heart, and the sympathy she showed to those who were unfortunate.¹ “Under the old order of things,” he says, “a mistress was a personage of the highest importance, and at times exercised absolute authority over absolute princes. As regards Madame de Montespan, we may be permitted to believe that she contributed to develop in Louis XIV. the love of great things, and a taste for art. She was passionately fond of luxury, which during the time of her favour seized upon the Court, and extended all over the country, polishing manners while perhaps corrupting them, giving great activity to commerce, manufactures, and the fine arts.” Naturally there is the reverse of the medal. The people suffered by all this luxury, and murmured; but the crime and folly committed two centuries ago were destined to bring forth good fruit, and to be a crown of glory to France. Madame de Montespan encouraged La Fontaine, Molière, Quinault, Racine, and Boileau; “and earned more solid glory still,” says Deprès, “by often lending her support to virtue.”

¹ Macaulay, speaking of the Duchess of Portsmouth at the time of the death of Charles II., says that “a life of frivolity and vice had not extinguished in her all sentiments of religion or all that kindness which is the glory of her sex.” So there was a good deal of resemblance between the two mistresses.

The children which were born to the king by Athenais de Rochehouart, Duchess de Montespan, were—

1. Louis Bourbon, Duc de Maine.
2. Louis César de Bourbon, Abbé of St. Denis and St. Germain-des-Près; legitimized in 1673; died in 1683, in his eleventh year.
3. Louis Alexandre de Bourbon, Comte de Toulouse.
4. Louise Françoise de Bourbon, called Mademoiselle de Nantes; legitimized in 1673; married the Prince de Condé.
5. Louise Marie de Bourbon, called Mademoiselle de Tours; legitimized in 1676; died in 1681.
6. Françoise Marie de Bourbon, called Mademoiselle de Blois; born in 1677; legitimized in 1781; married Philippe, Duke of Orleans, Regent of France.
- 7 and 8. Two sons, who died in the cradle.

In 1714, by an edict enregistered by the Parliament, both the Duc de Maine and the Comte de Toulouse were declared capable of succeeding to the crown in default of legitimate heirs, and in 1715 Louis XIV. ordered that there should be no difference made between the prince of the blood and his two legitimized sons.

Louis XIV. encountered much difficulty in getting the Duc de Chartres to marry Mademoiselle de Blois in consequence of the great inferiority of her rank. It took his Majesty, absolute as he was, four years to remove all the obstacles to this match, and to overcome the resistance of the Duke of Orleans, the

Duchess of Orleans, and the Duc de Chartres. Louis XIV., however, was determined to carry his point, and in this he appears to have been encouraged by Madame de Maintenon. Matters were thus managed. The king promised the blue ribbon to the two favourites of his brother if they succeeded in getting *Monsieur* to yield. Having made sure of *Monsieur*, the king sent for the Duc de Chartres, and spoke most kindly to him; he said that he wished to see him settled, that war was raging on all sides, that thus the supply of suitable princesses was cut off, that there were no princesses of the blood of his age, and that he had no better means of showing him his affection than by offering him his daughter, whose two sisters had married princes of the blood. His Majesty added, however, that no matter what his desire for this match, he did not wish to constrain him. "These words," says Guizot, "were uttered with all that terrible majesty so natural to the king, and addressed as they were to a timid young prince, their effect may be imagined. He could only stammer out that he would obey his father and mother. 'If that be the case, and you consent,' replied the king, 'your father and mother will offer no opposition. Is it not so?' he added, turning to *Monsieur*, who was present. *Monsieur* signified his consent, and the king sent for *Madame*. *Madame*, the second wife of *Monsieur*, was *née* Princess Palatine of Bavaria, a woman of an exceedingly harsh and arrogant temper, and so strongly was she opposed to

this *mésalliance*, which she considered more shameful than a crime, that she had already exacted from her son a promise that he would refuse to marry Mademoiselle de Blois. When *Madame* arrived, his Majesty explained what had taken place. Having counted upon the refusal of her son, she was struck dumb with surprise; then darting two furious glances at *Monsieur* and at the Duc de Chartres, she said, 'Since they wish it, I have no more to say'—made her reverence and swept from the royal presence, followed by her son. *Madame* loaded him with reproaches, burst into tears, and drove him from her presence. The next day when the Duc de Chartres according to custom stooped to kiss the hand of his mother, she gave him a good box on the ears in presence of all the Court, and covered him with confusion."

The marriage was celebrated with great pomp, although *Madame* wept and stormed, as St. Simon says, like Ceres after the rape of Proserpine, and although the face of *Monsieur* was piteous to behold; Louis XIV. promising the bride for dowry 2,000,000 francs on the signing of peace, and giving her in the meantime the interest on that sum; a pension of 50,000 crowns, 200,000 crowns in precious stones, and the Palais Royal.

Shortly afterwards the Duc de Maine was married to Mademoiselle Charolais, the daughter of the Prince de Condé, and in this way all the natural children of the king were united to legitimate members of the

priests exhibited the host, but all in vain; the king was obliged to rise from his sick-bed to appear on the balcony, and to promise that ministers should be dismissed.

Deeply mortified at this display of popular indignation, the unfortunate monarch fled first to the Escorial, and then to Aranjuez. Charles, however, was not destined to enjoy peace of either body or mind in that delightful retreat. The succession had yet to be settled. Several eminent legal authorities declared that in their opinion the act of renunciation signed by the late Queen of France ought not to be construed according to the letter, but according to the spirit. The real object of the renunciation was to prevent the union of France and Spain under one crown, and this union was not contemplated. Charles himself infinitely preferred the House of Austria to the House of Bourbon. Although Louis XIII. had married Anne of Austria; although Louis XIV. had married his sister; and although his first wife, whom he loved so tenderly, was the niece of Louis XIV., Charles regarded the French as his natural enemies. Porto Carrero was evidently aware the only chance which he and his party had was to work upon the religious terrors of the monarch, and to this effect the cardinal, after many vain endeavours to bring the king to declare himself in favour of the Duc d'Anjou, persuaded him to consult the Pope, well knowing that his Holiness would not dare to thwart the design of Louis XIV. The Pope in fact declared that right

rested with the House of Bourbon. Charles still doubted ; but when he found that the papal decision was backed up by divine after divine, who implored him not to die in sin, and not to bequeath civil war to his people, he yielded reluctantly. As he signed the will which transferred the whole Spanish monarchy to the Duc d'Anjou, and which was to be the cause of so many calamities to Europe, he burst into tears, exclaiming—"God gives kingdoms, and God takes them away. I am already as one dead."

Charles expired in the month of November, and it was not until after his death that the contents of his will were made known.

On the 9th November, 1700, a copy of the will reached Fontainebleau, where the French Court was staying. The king immediately summoned a council to deliberate on one of the most important questions ever submitted to a small knot of statesmen. Should his Majesty accept the Spanish inheritance for the Duc d'Anjou, or should he keep faith with the maritime powers, and hold to the second partition treaty? Should Louis XIV. accept a crown for his grandson, or should he accept an increase of territory for himself? The choice, as Mignet puts it, lay between the honour of the royal family and the welfare of the kingdom ; between the establishment of the House of Bourbon in Spain and in Italy, and an extension of French power ; between a short war, the success of which could not be doubtful, and a long war with an uncertain issue. If Louis XIV. accepted the will he

would inevitably have to face another European alliance more formidable than that which had forced him to sign the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, or that which had humbled his pride at Ryswick. If he abided by the partition treaty he could have only the emperor to fight against, while both Holland and England were prepared to help him, the former with twelve and the latter with fifteen vessels of war, to secure his portion of the spoil.

The extraordinary council which met to debate this matter consisted, in addition to the king, of only four persons, the dauphin, the Duc de Beauvilliers, the governor of the children of the royal family; the Marquis de Torcy, the minister for foreign affairs, and the Chancellor Pontchartrain; and there was no time for hesitation, for the Spanish couriers who brought the will to Paris, had orders, if Louis XIV. did not accept the crown, to go at once to Vienna and to offer it to the emperor for the Archduke Charles. The Marquis de Torcy was the first to give his advice. He said that there would be war in any case, and that it would be better to fight for the whole than for a portion; that if France rejected the will the House of Austria would become the legitimate heir to the Spanish crown, while the Spaniards, wounded in their pride, would be completely estranged. The Duc de Beauvilliers who spoke next, argued against accepting the will, on the ground that it would lead to a European war, which would ruin France. The chancellor wavered between the two courses open to his

Majesty, while the dauphin expressed himself in favour of accepting the crown left to his son. Louis XIV. hesitated for a while; turned the matter over in his mind for four days, and then came to a decision which brought France to the brink of ruin, and undid the whole work of his reign. A note was drawn up in the sense of the Marquis de Torcy's arguments, and was communicated to the Powers, and Louis XIV. sent for the Duc d'Anjou, hailed him King of Spain, declared that the Pyrenees had ceased to exist, and shortly afterwards despatched the new king to Madrid, where he was received with enthusiasm. Philip carried with him a good deal of sound advice in the shape of thirty-three articles, traced out for his guidance by his grandfather. A few of these are worth remembering—

1. Never neglect any of your duties, especially your duty to God.

4. Declare yourself on every occasion in favour of virtue against vice.

6. Love your wife; live on good terms with her; ask God to give you a suitable one. I do not think that you should take an Austrian.

7. Love the Spaniards, and all your subjects. Do not prefer those who flatter you the most. Esteem those who for a good purpose risk offending you. They are your real friends.

12. Never neglect business for pleasure; but make a rule so as to have a certain time for liberty and amusement.

18. Treat every one well ; never say a disagreeable thing to any one. Distinguish between persons of quality and of merit.

24. Keep all the French in good order.

Having accepted the crown of Spain, it might have been supposed that Louis XIV. would have done what he could to appease the powers, and to lessen, if not entirely remove, their apprehensions.

Mignet accuses his Majesty of having committed a most incredible blunder at this critical juncture—that of irritating both Holland and England. When the emperor heard of the will, he immediately took up arms, but he was not in a position to take the field alone. The consequence was that the Duc d'Anjou entered Madrid without opposition, was hailed with enthusiasm by the Spaniards, and was acknowledged by the maritime powers as king. Neither Holland nor England, much to the disappointment of William III., were inclined to quarrel with Louis XIV. for having chosen the will rather than the partition. In bitterness of spirit William III. wrote :—"It grieves me to the heart that almost every one rejoices that France has preferred the will to the treaty."

But England and Holland were soon goaded into action by the want of good faith exhibited by the French king. In accordance with the treaty of Ryswick, the several places in the Spanish Netherlands were garrisoned by the Dutch. Suddenly Louis XIV., in the name of his grandson, drove out the Dutch garrisons, which were replaced by French troops ;

while the Elector of Bavaria, who had charge of the Spanish Netherlands, and upon whom William III. counted, declared for France, and proclaimed the Duc d'Anjou at Brussels as king. This act alone proved sufficient to arouse the anger of the British nation, and William III., with the consent of the Parliament, demanded the withdrawal of the French troops, a demand which was haughtily rejected. It was then found that, in spite of the formal clauses in the will of Charles, the Duc d'Anjou, or rather Philip V. as he now was, had not been called upon to renounce his rights to the throne of France before leaving for Madrid. On the contrary, by *lettres patentes*, dated December, 1700, he retained his rights to the French crown, as second son of the dauphin. This opened up the possibility, should the Duke of Burgundy die without leaving a son behind him, of one day wearing both the crown of Spain and that of France.

This prospect was viewed with alarm, as menacing both the independence of Spain and the security of Europe. But Louis XIV. in his pride did not stop here. By the treaty of Ryswick he had acknowledged William III.; but now, on the death of James II. at St. Germain, he turned round and acknowledged his son as King of England. This act was considered as a declaration of war by men of all parties in England, and both king and Parliament determined to accept the challenge.

We may leave the conduct of Louis XIV. in these

matters to be judged by his own countrymen. Mignet says—"He violated the partition treaty by accepting the will; he violated the will by the *lettres patentes*; and then he violated the treaty of Ryswick by introducing troops into the Low Countries, and when James II. died, by recognizing his son." Nor are other writers much more tender for the *Grand Monarque*, whose perfidious policy once more lighted the torch of war. When the French ambassador endeavoured to excuse the conduct of his master to the King of England, he was begged not to fatigue himself, as his most Christian Majesty had merely acted after his usual manner.

William III. was dying, but before he expired he formed the Grand Alliance of the European Powers against the House of Bourbon, and on the 2nd May, 1702, war was proclaimed by concert at Vienna, London, and the Hague. On one side were France, Spain, Bavaria, and for a while Portugal, with Savoy and Modena; on the other, the Empire, England, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, the Palatinate, and the bulk of the German States. Macaulay says that the two hostile coalitions were not unequally matched as regards territory, wealth, and population; but the fact is, that France stood almost alone. The French said that Spain was with them, but Spain had neither men, money, nor ships. She had been ruined by a long series of wars with her present ally. She was now Bourbon, but the Bourbons had treated her as the

boa-constrictor treats its victims; all the vitality had been crushed out of her by Henri IV., Louis XIII. and Anne of Austria, and Louis XIV. had now swallowed the helpless prey. The Marquis de Torcy compared Spain to a body without a soul, which France was obliged to feed and support at her own expense. And when Philip V. arrived at Madrid, he found the government in the hands of Porto Carrero, to whose talent for intrigue he owed his crown. Philip could hardly dismiss a minister to whom he was so deeply indebted, and yet he must have been soon convinced of his incapacity as a statesman. His grandfather, who had a keen appreciation of character, wrote to the Marquis d'Harcourt, saying—"Every one knows how incapable the cardinal is. He is an object of contempt to his own countrymen." This was the disdainful way in which Louis XIV. wrote of the prelate who had so recently acted as his tool by working on the religious terrors of the unfortunate Charles.

But Louis XIV. was not satisfied with merely seating his grandson on the throne of Spain. In order to make still more sure of Philip, he married him to the daughter of his ally, the Duke of Savoy, knowing that he would allow himself to be governed by the queen. As a further precaution, he selected the Princess Orsini to be first lady of the bedchamber to her Majesty, deeming that, as the daughter of a French peer, and the widow of a Spanish grandee,

she was admirably fitted to play the part of a spy at Madrid.¹

Heinsius, Marlborough, and Eugene, or the *triumvirs*, says a French historian, replaced the chief of the League who had just died. Heinsius, Grand Pensioner of Holland, who governed the Republic with the authority of a monarch; Marlborough, who had first learned the art of war under Turenne and Prince Eugene, the son of the Comtesse de Soissons, *née* Olympe de Mancini, who had sworn revenge because Louis XIV. had refused to make "the *Abbé de Savoie*" a colonel. We have no intention of dwelling upon any but the leading results of the War of Succession, the military details of which occupy eleven 4to volumes in the National Library of Paris.

The first great disaster which the French experienced was the loss of the battle of Blenheim, where Marlborough and Eugene were opposed to Tallard and Marsin. The French marshals blundered terribly, Marsin forgetting a whole corps in the village of Blenheim, which was obliged to surrender without having been engaged; they divided their forces into

¹ The Princess Orsini, better known in France as Madame des Ursins, belonged to the ancient family of La Tremouille. She married first the Prince de Chalais, and then the Duke of Bracciano, the head of the Orsini family. On being left a widow for the second time, she Frenchified her name. She was a very intriguing woman, and managed to rule both Philip V. and his first wife. She had a reputation for talent which her correspondence does not justify. She was the bosom friend of Madame de Maintenon, who up to the last wrote to her in terms of the greatest deference.

two distinct armies, between which Marlborough forced his way. The result was, that the French were totally defeated, leaving 12,000 dead or wounded on the field, losing 14,000 prisoners, all their artillery, nearly all their colours, and some 100 leagues of territory. The Elector of Bavaria, instead of entering Vienna, as he had hoped, was obliged to fly from Brussels; the Imperial troops appeared on the banks of the Rhine, and Villars was recalled in hot haste to save Alsace. Another brilliant success on the part of England was the capture of Gibraltar, seized while the garrison was at prayers.

In 1705, owing to the Imperialists and the Dutch generals refusing to second him, Marlborough did nothing; but in Spain, where Charles III. had been proclaimed by the allies, and where he was supported by the people of Arragon, Lord Peterborough astonished the world by the capture of Barcelona—a success which won over Catalonia and Valentia.

But fresh reverses were in store for France. In 1706, Marlborough, no longer fettered, appeared in Flanders, and on the 23rd May defeated the French under Villeroi at Ramillies, and drove them back in disorder under the walls of Louvain. In an hour and a half the French lost 5000 killed or wounded, 15,000 prisoners, and their guns, and this victory opened the gates of Antwerp, Brussels, and Ostend to “Corporal John.” In this same year Eugene made himself master of the Milanais, Mantua, and Naples, slaying or dispersing 60,000 French soldiers, and capturing their

military chest, and 140 pieces of artillery. Marshal Marsin was killed, and the Duke of Orleans wounded. Concerning this terrible disaster Smollet says—"This was such a fatal stroke to the interest of Louis, that Madame de Maintenon would not make him fully acquainted with the state of his affairs. He was told that the Duke of Orleans had raised the siege of Turin at the approach of Prince Eugene; but he knew not that his own army was defeated and ruined." The loss of the French is set down by Smollett as 5000 slain, 7000 prisoners, 225 guns, 180 mortars, ammunition, tents, baggage, 5000 beasts of burden, 10,000 horses, belonging to thirteen regiments of dragoons, and the mules of the commissary-general, so richly laden that this part of the booty alone was valued at 3,000,000 livres.

In addition to the Turin disaster, Charles III. entered Madrid, the English took Carthagena, the Portuguese, Ciudad-Rodrigo; while an Anglo-Portuguese army, under the command of a Huguenot refugee, "the Comte de Rouvigny," better known to us as Lord Galway,¹ occupied Estramadura.

¹ In *The Huguenots*, by Smiles, chapter xii., this officer is described as the second Marquis de Rouvigny, who served with great distinction under Turenne and Condé. Although Louis XIV. wished to retain him in the service, he left France with the other Protestants, and settled at Greenwich. Being allowed to enjoy his French property, he did not join the British army until he heard that his only brother and Marshal Schomberg had been killed at the Boyne. Rouvigny then offered his services to William III., who gave him a regiment of Huguenot cavalry. He at once joined General Ginkell in Ireland, greatly distinguished himself at

In consequence of these reverses Louis XIV. made overtures to the Dutch. He offered Heinsius to share the Spanish monarchy between Charles and Philip, the latter to have the two Sicilies and the Tuscan ports. This offer was rejected. It was even proposed in the council chamber of Louis XIV. to give up Spain altogether, and to send Philip to reign in America; and Clement XI. thought the Archduke Charles so secure on the throne that he addressed him as—"Our very dear son, the King of Spain."

In 1707 matters took a more favourable turn for France. Marshal Berwick, the son of James II. and Arabella Churchill, defeated Lord Galway and Las Minas at Almanza, and thus recovered Spain for Philip V., while the Duke of Orleans captured Lerida. Villars won fresh triumphs on the Rhine, and Eugene, who had penetrated into Provence, and had laid siege to Toulon, supported by the British fleet, was driven back into Italy. In Flanders the plans of Marlborough were foiled by the strategy of the Duc de Vendôme and the supineness of the Dutch, whose warlike ardour had begun to cool down.

Aughrim, and was raised to the Irish peerage under the title of the Earl of Galway. Rouvigny then fought in Flanders and Italy. After being further employed in the field and in diplomatic missions, Lord Galway obtained the command of the Anglo-Portuguese force engaged in the war with Spain. After his defeat at Almanza he returned to England, where he had many friends, and died 3rd September, 1720, at the age of seventy-two years.

At Almanza was seen the strange spectacle of Englishmen led by a French refugee, and the Spanish army led by an English refugee—Marshal Berwick.

The attack on Toulon was a most important affair. The Duke of Savoy, although one of his daughters was married to the Duke of Burgundy, and another to the King of Spain, had joined the allies on the promise of receiving for his share of the spoil the provinces of Dauphiny and Provence. He and Prince Eugene were to attack Toulon by land, while an English fleet of forty-eight vessels, under the command of Sir Cloudesley Shovel, was to bombard the place by sea. Although both town and port were admirably protected, the former by a chain of works bristling with cannon, and the entrance of the latter by fire-ships, the greatest anxiety reigned at Versailles respecting the result of an attack, and this anxiety was increased when it became known that Prince Eugene had carried the heights of St. Catherine, from which he had begun to open fire on the town. Louis XIV., who considered the safety of France bound up with the fate of Toulon, ordered his grandsons, the Dukes of Burgundy and Berri, to repair to the scene of action, while the Duke of Berwick was recalled from Spain to give them the benefit of his advice.¹ For various reasons the attack failed. The French recaptured the heights of St. Catherine; Prince Eugene and the Duke of Savoy were forced to withdraw their forces,

¹ "On the 18th August, 1707, I received by a cabinet courier the order to hasten to Provence, in order to serve under the Duke of Burgundy, who was to march to the relief of Toulon." The Duke of Berwick hurried thither, but on reaching Beziers he learned that the siege had been raised, and so after reposing for a couple of days he returned to Spain.

and had the French commander exhibited any vigour, the allies would have suffered a signal disaster.

When Lord Peterborough's conduct was made the subject of an inquiry in the House of Lords, he said, concerning this affair—"I proposed to get 5000 men from Lord Galway to assist in the siege of Toulon, and that he should act defensively. I returned to Spain from Turin for this purpose. Lord Galway refused these men; he refused to act defensively, and he lost the battle of Almanza."

It is true that Sir Cloudesley Shovel inflicted a severe blow on the French navy by burning eight, and sinking twenty, of the enemy's ships of war.

In 1708 came another turn in the tide of affairs. At Oudenarde a superior French force, under the nominal command of the Duke of Burgundy, with Vendôme as his lieutenant, was attacked and defeated by Marlborough, who, if he had been left to himself, would have carried the war into the heart of France. It was supposed that France was exhausted, and yet for this campaign Louis XIV. had managed to place 100,000 men in the field, as opposed to 80,000 mustered by the allies. According to French accounts, Oudenarde was not much of a battle in itself; it was rather a heavy affair of advanced guards, which did not cost the vanquished more than 1500 men. Vendôme, they say, wished to recommence the fight the next day, but to this the Duke of Burgundy and his advisers were opposed. In his wrath Vendôme is said to have exclaimed—"Then we must retire, since

you wish it ; you have long desired this." The retreat was disastrous ; it was conducted without the slightest order ; whole regiments were disbanded ; during the pursuit the enemy took prisoners or killed 10,000 men ; Ghent and Bruges fell into the hands of the conquerors, and Lille, in spite of the heroic defence of Boufflers, was forced to capitulate. The road to Paris was open to the allies ; a Dutch detachment advanced as far as Versailles, and snapped up the king's chief equerry, thinking him to be the dauphin, on the bridge of Sèvres, between Versailles and the capital. Whoever was to blame for the defeat of Oudenarde, it is certain that for the moment the king's anger fell upon Vendôme, who was disgraced ; but Vendôme was not a general whose services could long be dispensed with.

In 1709 the state of France was desperate indeed, and again all her resources were apparently exhausted. The public debt amounted to £83,000,000, an immense amount considering the value of money at that period ; the expenditure exceeded the revenue by nearly £4,000,000, credit was annihilated, and loans, tontines, and other devices had to be resorted to in order to make good a portion of the deficit. Money was borrowed from Peru at the rate of 10 per cent. ; Louis XIV. and many of the nobles sent their plate to the mint. A number of illustrious families at Versailles fed upon oaten bread, the example being set by Madame de Maintenon, for a severe winter added to the general misery ; the olives were frozen ;

there was hardly a vineyard left in the south of France, and the fruit-trees and the corn in the north perished. Famine stalked through the land ; insurrections broke out ; the payment of taxes was refused ; the troops themselves took to smuggling ; bands of peasants marched through the country plundering where they went. In some places the people broke all the ties which united them to the Government and returned to a primitive state ; as the Government imposed a tax upon all civil acts, they baptized their children themselves, and married without the usual formalities.

Such was the deplorable condition of France when Louis XIV. again humiliated himself, and once more appealed to the Dutch, whom he had formerly treated with such arrogance and cruelty. The *triumvirs*, however, did not consider the French king sufficiently chastised ; he had sent President Rouillé to the Hague to sue for peace ; it was some time before the president could obtain even a hearing, and when, on the part of his master, he offered to yield all that the allies had fought for—to withdraw all aid from Philip V. ; to surrender ten Flemish fortresses to the Dutch ; to restore to the Empire all that France had taken since the peace of Westphalia ; to acknowledge Queen Anne ; to banish the Pretender, and to demolish the fortifications of Dunkirk—he was treated with scorn. The French negotiator was informed that if he wanted peace Louis XIV. must, with his own troops, compel his grandson to descend from the Spanish throne,

that he must restore Strasburg, and renounce all sovereignty over Alsace.

When these humiliating conditions were transmitted to Versailles, the king laid them before his council, composed of the dauphin, the Duke of Burgundy, the Chancellor Pontchartrain, the Duc de Beauvilliers, the Marquis de Torcy, Chamillart and Desmarests. The chancellor was in favour of peace at any price. The Ministers of War and Finance acknowledged that their resources were exhausted; and Beauvilliers, who had formerly opposed the war, is said to have drawn tears from the Duke of Burgundy by the picture he drew of the state of misery to which the country had been reduced. Strange to say, it was this very misery which, lending courage to despair, was destined to save the nation.

The council came to no immediate decision, for the Marquis de Torcy offered to proceed himself to the Hague to endeavour to procure better terms. He was not successful, and Rouillé was ordered to leave Holland within twenty-four hours to convey to his master the ultimatum of the *triumvirs*.

This want of generosity on the part of the allies was turned to account by Louis XIV. "Since I am driven to make war," he exclaimed, "I prefer making it against my enemies rather than against my children," and he ordered the extravagant demands brought back by President Rouillé to be published and circulated through the kingdom. France responded to this appeal on the part of her aged monarch, and

from all sides men flocked to the standards. Some French writers have it that indignation aroused patriotism. Others that "this appeal to patriotism was felt throughout France ; those who were in want of bread became soldiers, and an army was raised equal in numbers to that of the coalition."

The great event of the campaign was the sanguinary battle of Malplaquet. According to Duruy the French soldiers, who had been a whole day without food, threw away their rations in order to rush to the combat. But there was no need for this, as the French were entrenched in a position which was considered impregnable ! The French were successful on the left, but Marlborough broke the right, and Marshal Villars, his knee smashed by a musket-ball, was forced to retreat. The allies lost 20,000 men in this stubbornly-contested affair, and the French only 8000 ; but the French were driven from their positions, and Mons and other places fell into the hands of the enemy in spite of the masterly way in which Boufflers conducted the retreat.

Let us note that the father of Frederick the Great with his 10,000 Prussians greatly contributed to the gaining of this victory. "Frederick William," says Carlyle, "saw hot service that campaign of 1709 ; siege of Tournay, and far more ;—stood, among other things, the fiery battle of Malplaquet, one of the terriblest and deadliest feats of war ever done. No want of intrepidity and soldier virtue in the Prussian troops or their Crown Prince ; least of all on that terrible

day, 11th September, 1709 ;—of which he keeps the anniversary ever since, and will do all his life, the doomsday of Malplaquet always a memorable day to him.”¹ And, “at Malplaquet, in those murderous, inexpugnable French lines, bloodiest of obstinate fights (upwards of 30,000 left on the ground), the Prussians brag that it was they who picked their way through a certain peat-bog, reckoned impassable ; and got fairly in on the French wing—to the great comfort of Marlborough, and little Eugene his brisk comrade on that occasion. Marlborough knew well the worth of these Prussian troops, and also how to stroke his majesty into continuing them in the field.”²

In addition to the disaster of Malplaquet, Louis XIV. had the mortification of learning that Saragossa had been wrested from his grandson, and that Philip had again been obliged to leave Madrid, into which capital Charles III. entered in triumph.

Louis XIV. was once more obliged to sue for peace. Taking advantage of an ambiguity in one of the articles proposed by the allies, he declared himself ready to accept their terms, and the consequence was that negotiations were opened at Gertruydenberg, the Marshal d’Uxelles and the Abbé Polignac acting on behalf of France. Louis XIV. now promised to give no assistance to his grandson ; he offered to restore Strasburg and Brisach, to renounce the sovereignty of Alsace, to raze to the ground all the fortresses

¹ *Frederick the Great*, Book I. ch. iii.

² *Ibid.* Book III. ch. xix.

between Bâle and Philipsburg, to fill up the port of Dunkirk, and to leave Lille, Tournay, Ypres, and other places to Holland; and he even stooped so far as to offer the allies £40,000 a month to assist them in dethroning Philip V. But Louis XIV. humiliated himself in vain. Once more his offers were rejected, and hostilities continued.

In 1710, Vendôme, who had been disgraced after Oudenarde, was sent back to Spain. His name alone was worth an army. Numbers of volunteers flocked to his standard; the whole Spanish nation sprang to arms, and Philip V., who up to that time had not appeared in the field, placed himself at the head of the troops. Louis XIV. acted wisely in reinstating Vendôme, who, in spite of his numerous faults, rose in time of difficulty to the height of a great general. Strange to say, this able soldier is said to have been devoid of personal courage, and at the Court of Versailles it was considered an act of cowardice to insult Vendôme. Macaulay says of the duke—"This man was distinguished by the filthiness of his person, by the brutality of his demeanour, by the gross buffoonery of his conversation, and by the impudence with which he abandoned himself to the most nauseous of all vices. His sluggishness was incredible. Even when engaged in a campaign he often passed whole days in bed. His strange torpidity had been the cause of some of the most serious disasters which the armies of the House of Bourbon had sustained. But when he was roused by any great emergency, his

resources, his energy, and his presence of mind were such as had been found in no French general since the death of Luxembourg."

Such was the general who once more placed the crown of Spain on the head of Philip V., defeating an inferior English force under Stanhope, and then beating the Austrian general Staremburg, who was marching to his relief, in the obstinate and sanguinary battle of Villaviciosa. Again matters took a sudden and wonderful turn in favour of Louis XIV., who was destined to owe his safety, not to the strength of his own right arm, not to laurels reaped either in the field or in diplomacy, but to a Court revolution in England, which drove the Marlboroughs from office, and brought in a Tory government headed by Harlay and St. John, who summoned a new Parliament, secured a strong majority, and throwing over the allies, determined to conclude peace as expeditiously as possible; and while Marlborough was forcing the lines of Bouchain and Quesnoi, clandestine negotiations were going on between the British Government and France. At this moment the designs of the Tories were powerfully aided by the death of Joseph I., and the accession of his brother, the Archduke Charles, to the Imperial crown.

A series of misfortunes now burst over the head of Louis XIV. Although deprived of the help of England, and although Marlborough had been recalled, still Eugene remained in the field, and commanded a force far superior to that of the French, which even

threatened Paris. In addition to this, Louis XIV., in the course of the year, lost the dauphin, the Duke and the Duchess of Burgundy, and their eldest son.¹ The dauphin was perhaps no great loss for the country, but great things were expected from the Duke of Burgundy; and the duchess had no sooner appeared at Court than she won the heart of the king. As if these calamities were not sufficient, Vendôme died in Spain.

For a while it appeared as if the negotiations with England would be broken off in consequence of the death of the dauphin and of his eldest son, the Duke of Burgundy, which rendered it probable that Philip V. of Spain might soon succeed to the French throne. No one now stood between him and the reigning monarch, with the exception of the sickly child who afterwards became Louis XV., and whose two brothers died in childhood.

¹ The dauphin, the only legitimate son of Louis XIV., died in his fiftieth year. One can hardly say that he lived in history. *Sans vices, sans virtue, sans passions, and sans will*, he would have left no trace behind him, if, one day, a gleam of intelligence and humanity had not illuminated that mind sunk in material enjoyment: that was the day upon which he endeavoured to oppose the revocation of the edict of Nantes.—*Henri Martin*, t. iii. p. 548.

After the death of his father, the Duke of Burgundy, now dauphin, was accorded an effective participation in public affairs, and almost a share in the royal authority. Louis XIV. frequently sent his ministers to work with him, and one day addressing an assembly of the clergy in the presence of his grandson, he said—“Here is a prince who will soon succeed me, and who, by his virtue and his piety, will render the Church more flourishing and the country more prosperous.”—*Dangeau*, t. iii. p. 178.

However, Louis XIV. obtained from Philip V. a renunciation of his rights to the throne of France, the preliminaries of peace were signed in London, and conferences were opened at Utrecht much to the disgust of the Dutch and the Imperialists. Even after the defection of England matters looked so gloomy for the French arms that Louis XIV. summoned a council to deliberate whether it would not be advisable for him to leave Paris and fall back behind the Loire. In fact Eugene, at the head of 100,000 men, was besieging Landrecies, and once Landrecies taken, his road to the French capital lay open. . The whole country was in a state of the most intense alarm, when Louis XIV. once more appealed to his people and to Marshal Villars. In his extremity he wrote to the marshal—"The confidence which I have in you is palpable, since I place in your hands the forces and the safety of the State. I know your zeal, and the gallantry of my troops; but yet fortune may betray them. Should a disaster happen, I intend to go to Peronne or to St. Quentin, to pick up all the troops possible, to make a last effort with you, and to perish together or save the country."

At Marli there was a touching scene when Villars came to take leave of the king before starting to take command of the army. The mask of bronze which usually covered the face of Louis XIV. fell, and the aged monarch wept before his favourite general. "You see in what a state I am," he said; "there are few examples of misfortune like mine; that one loses,

in the same month, one's grandson and granddaughter and their son, all of whom gave great hopes, and were tenderly loved. God punishes me ; I have deserved it. I shall suffer less in another world."

Eugene extended his lines overmuch. They were forced by Villars. Landrecies was relieved ; Douay, Marchiennes, Bouchain and Quesnoi were recaptured, and the frontier was once more secure. The victory of Denain is still one of the most popular triumphs in France, and "The dragoons of Villars" will live in song for many a year to come.¹

Thanks to Marshal Villars and his army, Louis XIV. was able to conclude peace upon honourable terms—terms in fact which were brilliant when compared with the humiliating conditions which the *triumvirs* had considered themselves in a position to exact when they met at the Hague.

The Treaty of Utrecht, which gave rise to such a deadly party feud in England, and which restored peace except as between France and the Empire, was signed on April 11th, 1713. In this treaty Philip V. renounced all claim to the crown of France. The Duke of Savoy obtained Sicily, and assumed the title of King of Sardinia. The advantages which accrued to England were as follows :—Louis XIV. abandoned the Pretender, recognized the right of Anne to the throne, and of the Protestant succession. Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Hudson's Bay fell to her

¹ An *Opéra Comique* of that name is still popular in France, and frequently performed.

share, and she retained Gibraltar and Minorca. At the same time Louis XIV. promised to demolish the port of Dunkirk, which had cost him immense sums, to release all his subjects who had been thrown into prison on account of their religion, and to concede important commercial privileges to England. Holland regained the right of placing garrisons in the fortified towns of the Netherlands, to serve as a barrier against France. The Electorate of Brandebourg was enlarged, and became the kingdom of Prussia—a kingdom where “young Fritzchen,” afterwards Frederick the Great, was then being rocked in his cradle.

Several English historians have sneered at the Treaty of Utrecht. Mr. Green says that the original aim of the war was silently abandoned. Carlyle scoffed at it for much the same reason. But surely times were not the same in 1713 as they were in 1700. Look at a few facts—Louis XIV. had acknowledged James III. as King of England—now the Pretender was to be banished. He recognized the Act of Settlement, and this was no small matter seeing the state of Queen Anne’s health, the number of adherents the Stuarts possessed in England, and the possibility of a Jacobite rising on the death of her Majesty. Again, Louis XIV. had refused to deprive his grandson of his right to the French throne. He now obtained his renunciation. Louis XIV. had very properly refused to drive Philip V. from Spain by force of arms; the death of the Prince of Bavaria and of the Emperor Leopold had rendered

this act of violence unnecessary. Had Louis XIV. yielded to the demands of the *triumvirs*, the Archduke Charles would have become Emperor of Austria and King of Spain instead of, as was feared, the Duc d'Anjou becoming King of France and of Spain. Both these contingencies were equally dreaded by diplomatists, who kept a watchful eye on the balance of power. Dunkirk had been awarded by Cardinal Mazarin to Cromwell; it had been sold to Louis XIV. by Charles II.; it was destined to be besieged in vain by the Duke of York in 1793. Now this nest of privateers was to be dismantled. "The crime of Dunkirk," says Barbier, "was that in the course of one year it sent to sea no less than seven hundred and ninety-two corsairs," which preyed upon Dutch and English commerce to an enormous extent. The inhabitants of the town, who were ruined, actually sent a deputation to England to implore the clemency of Queen Anne, who declined to give them any relief. "It was a sad blow for Louis XIV.," remarked Voltaire, "that his subjects should have been reduced to ask a favour from the Queen of England, and more sad still that the queen should have been obliged to refuse it."

That the Treaty of Utrecht gave rise to bickerings of no ordinary character is beyond a question. The amenities of private life were for a while suspended; ladies appeared in the theatres wearing party badges; members were extremely hot in debate, and Whigs and Tories refused to speak to each other except

across the floor of the House in terms of reproach. Macaulay has written strongly in favour of the treaty—in favour of Walpole, of Swift, and of Prior, who advocated peace. The emperor for a few months continued the war, but after the loss of one or two battles, and of English subsidies, he also agreed to come to terms, and the War of Succession was brought to a close.

The value of a treaty of course depends on the good faith of those who are a party to it. Now one of the gravest objections raised to the Treaty of Utrecht was that it would not be observed by Philip V. should a child, whose life was despaired of, follow the rest of his family to the grave. The French lawyers, too, had declared Philip's renunciation void, as being inconsistent with the fundamental law of the realm. The coalition was quite aware of this, but argued that the alliance which could force Louis XIV. to conclude the treaty, could force France and Spain to observe it.

The renunciation of Philip V. ran thus—"I declare that I renounce of my own free-will, in my name, and in that of my descendants, my rights to the French crown, in favour of my brother, the Duc de Berri and his heirs, and of my uncle, the Duke of Orleans." This declaration was accepted by the Cortes on the 5th November, 1712, and was converted into a State law. On their side the Dukes of Berri and Orleans renounced all pretension to the throne of Spain, on condition of the succession not

passing to the House of Austria, and this renunciation was enregistered by the French Parliaments.

Another objection against the treaty was that with a Bourbon dynasty in both countries, Spain and France would act in concert, to the detriment of England. We have seen Louis XIII. waging war with his father-in-law, and, after his death, Anne of Austria continuing the war against her brother Philip IV., also the treatment of Spain by Louis XIV. So much for matrimonial alliances. As Macaulay properly observes—"Family affection has seldom produced much effect on the policy of princes. The state of Europe at the time of the peace of Utrecht proved that in politics the ties of interest are much stronger than those of consanguinity or affinity. The Elector of Bavaria had been driven from his dominions by his father-in-law. Victor Amadeus was in arms against his sons-in-law.¹ Anne was seated on a throne from which she had assisted to push a most indulgent father." And in fact we shall soon find the two branches of the House of Bourbon quarrelling with each other, and Charles of Austria and Philip, recently competitors for the throne of Spain, forming a close alliance.

The French historians observe that two Powers alone reaped any advantage by this war. Austria obtained magnificent possessions in Italy and the Low Countries, and recovered Hungary, while Eng-

¹ One of his daughters had married Philip V., and the other the Duke of Burgundy.

land became undisputed mistress of the seas, and continued to occupy Port Mahon, from which post she could observe Toulon and Gibraltar, from whence she menaced Spain, and which secured to her the entrance to the Mediterranean. One advantage accrued to France; the fact of the Spaniards being driven from the Low Countries removed a permanent cause for war!

Louis XIV. now became very much troubled as to what would happen after his death. The heir to the throne was but four years of age; there would therefore be a long minority, and he feared that the tutelage of the orphan monarch would be disputed by Philip V. and by the Duke of Orleans. Louis XIV. is said to have viewed either contingency with a feeling of dread. The success of Philip would set all Europe in a blaze once more, that of the Duke of Orleans would be the triumph of vice, and perhaps of crime, and in the meantime Europe was anxiously watching the course of events. Louis would fain not have made a will, but he at last consented. He complained afterwards that he had been forced to make it, probably by Madame de Maintenon and the Duc de Maine. He had made it so that he might die in peace. He had no confidence that its provisions would be accepted. However, in the end he yielded. The aged monarch hesitated between entirely depriving his nephew of the Regency, and the precaution of leaving him a title without power. He was reminded, however, of the manner in which

the will of Louis XIII. had been set aside, and was advised to summon the States-General, and to get them to name the regent of his choice. The dread of the Duke of Orleans was carried so far that it was proposed to erect the Council of Regency into a kind of National Assembly, into which should be admitted a deputy from each parliament,¹ and a deputy chosen from the states of each province.

There was no law or ancient usage to guide the king in the appointment of a regent. The natural person to select was undoubtedly the Duke of Orleans, nephew and son-in-law of his Majesty, and the chief of the royal family. But at this moment, as we have already observed, he was the object of the most terrible suspicions, and was exposed not only to the insults of the populace, but was shunned at Court as if he had been plague-stricken. Louis XIV. in speaking to his surgeon, Maréchal, called his nephew a *fanfaron de crimes*, meaning that he made himself out much worse than he really was. However, Louis XIV. was very loth to intrust him with the Regency, and more loth still to intrust him with the guardianship of the little dauphin, seeing that he was suspected of having caused the death of all his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, with the exception of the youngest of the royal race.²

¹ There were thirteen parliaments then in France.

² Henri Martin has thus described the painful position of Louis XIV.—“The most revolting reports were circulated respecting this family. . . The ambition of Philippe d’Orleans was as noted as his

Marmontel, in his *History of the Regency*, while admitting that there was "no law nor usage" to guide the king, declares the right of the Duke of Orleans to the Regency to have been incontestable. He mentions the names of several regents who exercised power during the minority of the king. One Count of Flanders was regent in the days of Philippe I., and another during the minority of Philippe V. Louis IX. commenced to reign under the Regency of his mother. There were several regents in the time of Charles VI., one which Marmontel omits being Henry V. of England, who

immorality. Even his qualities rose up in judgment against him in this hour of anguish and delirium; his taste for science and art threatened to be as fatal to him as the vices and impiety of which he made a display. He had bravely endeavoured to raise the devil, and had studied chemistry, which in the popular mind still meant that he was engaged in a search for the philosopher's stone, and transmutation of metals, and the manufacture of poison. On the death of his son-in-law, the Duc de Berri, there arose a general cry of 'Philippe has done the deed'; his daughter (the Duchesse de Berri), who shares his pleasures and his labours, is another Brinvilliers. On the day of the funeral the mob threatened to tear him to pieces; and at last the duke asked the king to send him to the Bastille, and to have him tried. What Louis XIV. must have felt may be easily imagined. It appeared as if the royal race from which he sprang was about to be extinguished; his son and his grandson were all dead and gone, and the doctors, probably because they were unable to combat the diseases which had played so much havoc, were divided in opinion upon the question of poison. And the king's son-in-law and his granddaughter were accused of being the assassins! Louis XIV. refused to consent to the scandal of a trial, and it was not until the little dauphin grew up that the terrible suspicion which hung over the Duke of Orleans was removed, and that the deaths in the royal family were attributed to a malignant epidemic, and not to poison."

had married the French king's daughter. Later on we have Catherine de Medicis, then Marie de Medicis, and then Anne of Austria, three women who were regents in a country in which the Salic law is in force.

In spite of all the objections to the Duke of Orleans, the king never seems to have contemplated confiding the Regency to Philip V., who claimed it, and wished to exercise the office by means of a deputy!

On Sunday the 29th July, 1714, we learn that the king, overwhelmed by all the calamities which had befallen himself and his family, summoned the first President and the Procurator-General to Marly, and thus addressed them. He said, that obliged to foresee the possibility of God in his wrath wishing to deprive France of the remaining legitimate princes of the august House of Bourbon, his intention was, far more in the interest of the State than in that of his legitimized children, the Duc du Maine and the Comte de Toulouse and their heirs, that they should be declared capable of succeeding to the throne.¹ He said that he considered it as an indispensable duty towards his people not to leave them exposed to the troubles which would tear the State to pieces in the event of the succession not being settled.

The will of Louis XIV. was drawn up by the

¹ It is strange that Louis should have considered the Almighty capable of punishing the legitimate and sparing the illegitimate princes!

Chancellor Voisin in conformity with this declaration ; it was signed at Marly on August 2nd, 1714, and sent to the Parliament on the 29th. It was sealed with seven seals, and the king on handing it to the chancellor said, "This is my will ; nobody knows what it contains but myself. I hand it to you to be kept by the Parliament, to which I can give no greater mark of esteem and confidence than by intrusting it with this document." By this will the tutelage of the king and the Regency were separated. Louis XIV. named his natural son the Duc du Maine guardian of his successor and commander of the household troops. The Regency was confided to a council of mediocrities presided over by the Duke of Orleans, who was to be shorn of all power. There were two codicils ; the first, dated 13th April, 1715, charged Marshal Villeroi to take all the necessary military measures to insure the execution of his will. The second codicil, signed the 23rd August, 1715, a week before the death of Louis, appointed Fleury, then an abbé, preceptor, and Le Tellier confessor of the young king.

Louis XIV. was quite right in supposing that Philip would not consider himself bound by a renunciation to which he swore when there appeared little chance of his succession to the French throne. While his grandfather was on his deathbed Philip dispatched Cellamare to Paris with secret instructions. Ostensibly he was to follow the religious quarrels over the bull *Unigenitus*, but in reality he was to

endeavour to obtain from Torcy, or even from Louis XIV. himself, information concerning the will. Should the rights of the Spanish monarchy not be fully recognized, he was to protest against it, for, as Philip said in his instructions to Cellamare, "it is my firm intention not to permit anything to be done to my prejudice, and to maintain inviolably my royal rights established and founded upon the laws of France. . ."

Cellamare was to do what he could in order to form a Spanish party both in Paris and in the provinces, and he was specially charged to thwart the supposed designs of the Duke of Orleans, against whom Philip V. very naturally had a deep grudge since the duke, when commanding in Spain, had endeavoured to take his place. However, Cellamare failed in his mission. He could glean no information concerning the will, the contents of which were at that time known to Louis XIV. alone. Philip V. spoke about marching troops to the frontier, but no such military demonstration took place.

Louis XIV. had no idea that his end was now so rapidly approaching; Dangeau tells us how on the 22nd August he examined several patterns and ordered some new clothes. His last illness dated in reality from the 11th August; on the 12th, however, he gave the Persian ambassador, who was about to leave Paris, an audience, and during the whole time that the ceremony lasted he remained standing. On the 25th August his pulse was very bad, and his mind

began to wander in a way which greatly alarmed his physicians. This lasted about a quarter of an hour, and on coming to his senses the king felt convinced that death was at hand. Thinking that he had not many hours to live, the expiring monarch at once began to set his house in order, and to give such directions as he considered necessary, and this with an admirable amount of courage and presence of mind. After having received the viaticum from the Cardinal de Rohan, grand almoner of France, he added a codicil to his will. Turning about he summoned to his bedside his old friend Marshal de Villeroi, his nephew and son-in-law the Duke of Orleans, and his two legitimized children, the Duc du Maine and the Comte de Toulouse, speaking to each in such a manner as not to be overheard by the other persons in the room, and moving each to tears. On the 24th, the doctors when they dressed his legs found that the gangrene with which they were attacked had reached the bone. At noon Louis XIV. sent for the little dauphin, who was brought to him by his governess, the Duchesse de Ventadour. "My child," he said to the infant, "you are about to become a great king; but all your happiness will depend upon putting your trust in God, and the care you take to lighten the burdens of your people, which I unfortunately was unable to do. You must not imitate me in my taste for building or for war: this is the way to ruin a nation. I often went to war without sufficient grounds, and continued to fight through vanity."

After having given his youthful successor this excellent advice, and pronounced his *mea maxima culpa*, he embraced the child and gave him his blessing. What actually passed during the last hours of the king it would be difficult to determine, so many and so contradictory are the versions. Some historians would lead us to believe that Louis XIV. ere he became unconscious was deserted by nearly every one, even by Madame de Maintenon, and his fanatical confessor Le Tellier. Another writer tells us that Le Tellier remained praying with the king up to the last, and a third that even the valets were so irritated at the manner in which he exhorted his majesty to repent, that they refused to allow him to remain in the room.

It appears that Madame de Maintenon, now eighty years of age, stayed with the king until the evening of the 30th August, when her friends begged her to retire, Louis XIV. having sunk into a lethargy which lasted till he died at eight a.m. 1st September, 1715, within four days of having accomplished his seventy-seventh year, and after a reign of seventy-two years. We shall see what Madame de Maintenon herself has to say on this subject when we come to deal with the correspondence of that remarkable woman.

The death of the king appears to have been hailed with delight in France, nor is this very extraordinary, seeing the state of misery to which the country had been reduced. "There was an explosion of joy," says Sismondi, "when the death of the great king was

announced to the people," and St. Simon tells us that Paris was weary of slavery, and breathed once more in the hope of being free, and of seeing the mighty who had abused their authority put down from their seats. The provinces, driven to despair and annihilated, now shook for joy, and thanked the Almighty for their deliverance.

The statues of the king were covered with derisive inscriptions,¹ and his remains were conveyed to St. Denis on the 9th September with such scant ceremony that the Republican historian Henri Martin

¹ A magnificent statue had been erected to Louis XIV. in what is still called the *Place des Victoires*; the pedestal was of marble covered with adulatory inscriptions, while four bas-reliefs represented the conquest of Franche Comté, the passage of the Rhine, the precedency gained by France over Spain, and the peace of Nimeguen. This pedestal was surmounted by the king, in bronze, clothed in his coronation robes, and behind him was a figure of Victory placing a wreath of laurel on his head. This statue, the gift of Marshal de la Feuillade, was illuminated at night by four lanterns. After the death of Louis XIV. demolition of the lanterns was ordered, owing, it is said, to the following Gascon distich alluding to the sun which Louis XIV. had taken for his emblem—

La Feuillade, sandis, je crois qué tu mé bernes,
De placer lé soleil entré quatré lanternes.

In 1792 the statue was entirely removed, and was replaced by a pyramid erected to the memory of the citizens who fell on the 10th August, when storming the Tuileries. In 1806 a colossal statue of Desaix replaced the pyramid, but as it was nude, and considered indecent, it was kept veiled. This statue was removed in 1815, and for it was substituted the Louis XIV. on horseback still to be seen. Dulaure says that the bronze used for this equestrian statue was furnished by the statue of Napoleon in the Place Vendôme pulled down by the royalists when the monarchy was dissolved.

pronounces the "apparatus" to have been mean even to indecency. Voltaire saw "little tents pitched along the road leading to St. Denis, where people were drinking, singing, and laughing. The Jesuit Le Tellier¹ was the chief cause of this universal joy. I heard several spectators say that they ought to set fire to the houses of the Jesuits with the funeral torches." And while the body of the king was thus being borne to its royal place of sepulture, there to repose until dragged from the grave during the Revolution, "his heart, abandoned by his unworthy courtiers, was taken to the church of St. Antoine by six Jesuits crammed into one carriage."

And thus did the great monarch, over whose tomb might have been inscribed—

"Quid-quid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi"

vanish from the scene.

In the journal of the faithful Dangeau we find two entries:—

"*Sunday, 1st September, 1715.*—The king died this morning at eight o'clock a quarter and a half [*sic*]; he gave up the ghost without an effort, like a candle which goes out. He had passed the night in an unconscious state. As soon as he had expired the Duke of Orleans with all the princes of the blood went to salute the young king. The Duke of Orleans bent the knee before him and kissed his hand. As soon as the infant heard himself called Sire and Majesty he

¹ Le Tellier was banished from the Court by the regent, who, however, gave him a small pension.

burst into sobs and tears, without having been told that the king was dead."

"*Monday, 9th September, 1715.*—The king gave no orders with respect to his funeral, although he had plenty of time to do so, since he made his will and added codicils. It was therefore decided to follow the ceremonies observed in the case of Louis XIII., and so to save money, time, and to avoid disputes; everything was therefore executed with all the modesty and humility which it was possible to observe in the case of a king. . ."

Louis XIV had five children by his wife—

1. Louis; born 1661, died 1711.
2. Philippe, who died when three years of age.

Three children who died in the cradle.

He had also three children by Mademoiselle de Lavallière, and seven by Madame de Montespan.

When the king disappeared from the scene, all his legitimate children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren had preceded him to the tomb with the exception of Philippe, the second son of the dauphin, King of Spain, and Louis, the third son of the Duke of Burgundy, who was destined to succeed him.

CHAPTER II.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.

FRANÇOISE D'AUBIGNÉ, Marquise de Maintenon, belonged to an old Anjou family, which could trace their ancestors back to the middle of the twelfth century, when they became gentlemen. We shall not follow the genealogy of the family from the date above-mentioned down to the time of the Marquise de Maintenon. Suffice it to say that in 1450 there was an Antoine d'Aubigné, who married Charlotte de Brie, and from this union sprung Pierre d'Aubigné; Jean d'Aubigné, who married Catherine de l'Estant, and who embraced the reformed religion; and Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, who married Susanne de Lezay. Théodore Agrippa had a son called Constant, who married Jeanne de Cardillac, and the fruit of this marriage was three children—^{Charles}Constant who died young, ^{Constant}Charles who became governor of Berry and who lived until 1703, and Françoise who became Marquise de Maintenon.

Agrippa d'Aubigné tells us that his son Constant in no way resembled him; in fact that he was a gambler and a drunkard, that he tried to despoil him, and that he abjured his religion and became a Roman

Catholic. Having feigned to return to the reformed faith, he became reconciled with his father, went to England, was consulted upon the La Rochelle affair in 1627, returned to Paris, and revealed everything to the French Government. For this piece of treachery he was disinherited and cursed by his father, and rewarded by the French king. On the 27th December, 1627, he married the daughter of Pierre de Cardillac and Louise de Montalembert, and having squandered his fortune, after having betrayed England to the French, wished to betray his country to the English. His treachery was discovered, he was thrown into gaol, and it was in the prison of Niort that Françoise d'Aubigné was born, on the 27th November, 1635—three years before Louis XIV. Though born in a prison, we see that when she was christened she had for godfather and godmother François Comte de la Rochefoucault and Susanne de Baudéan, daughter of the Baron de Neuillant, the governor of Niort!

We should have mentioned that Agrippa d'Aubigné had also two daughters, Marie, who married M. de Caumont Dade, and Louise, who married Benjamin Le Valois, Marquis de Villette. When Constant was in prison, his sister, the Marquise de Villette, took care of his children, and the little Françoise had the same nurse as her cousin. Upon Madame d'Aubigné procuring the release of her profligate husband, the family sailed for Martinique, where many strange adventures are said to have befallen Françoise d'Aubigné, and where her father made a large sum

of money which was soon lost at play ; and then he died. Madame d'Aubigné returned to France with her daughter, then ten years old, and taught her to read and understand Plutarch. Being reduced, however, to great distress, she went back for a time to Martinique, and Françoise was again confided to the care of the Marquise de Villette. "I am afraid," wrote Madame d'Aubigné to her sister-in-law, "that this *petite galeuse* will give you a great deal of trouble" (28th July, 1646). Françoise appears to have formed a deep attachment for the marquise, and some time afterwards, when asked to abjure Calvinism, she replied—"I will believe anything you wish, provided that I am not obliged to believe that my Aunt Villette will be damned."

As the Duc de Noailles remarks,¹ Madame de Villette had brought up her niece in the religion of her family, in that religion which her grandfather had so furiously defended, inspiring her at the same time by precepts and examples with the principles of morality, habits of devotion, and a taste for charity. Alas ! Madame de Neuillant, who was a zealous Catholic, on the pretence that Françoise d'Aubigné was born of Catholic parents, obtained an order from the Court that she should be taken away from the care of the Marquise de Villette. The Government at that moment was doing all in its power to diminish the number of Huguenots in France, but it had little idea of the value of the conversion it was about to make,

¹ *Madame de Maintenon*, by the Duc de Noailles.

and how the young lady who was to be transferred from the care of Aunt Villette to Madame de Neuillant would some thirty years later labour, not ineffectually, to convert the king.

Madame de Neuillant appears to have had no easy task ; kindness and threats were employed in vain to induce Françoise to change her religion ; she even resisted the ordeal of being treated like a servant, and sent into the fields to look after the turkeys, a strange method for getting her to change her ideas on the doctrines which divided the reformed Church from that of Rome. Françoise was packed off in despair to a convent, where she was allowed to remain for a short time through charity, as the zealous Madame de Neuillant refused to pay for her. She was then, after remaining for a short time with her mother, who had returned from Martinique, sent to the Ursulines in Paris, and there her abjuration was with great difficulty obtained.

Many years afterwards Madame de Maintenon related at St. Cyr the whole story of her resistance, and then of her conversion at the Ursulines, brought about by kindness and politeness on the part of a mistress of talent and common sense, who left her perfectly free in the exercise of her religion, never forced her to go to prayers or mass, and allowed her to eat meat on Friday.

Françoise d'Aubigné did not remain long at the convent of the Ursulines, but went to reside with her mother, who, on her return from Martinique,

lived in a house opposite to one occupied by the burlesque poet Scarron. Scarron, in spite of his deformity and suffering, possessed an inexhaustible fund of gaiety and wit, and so great was his reputation that crowds of persons of varied condition flocked to see him ; and gentlemen of the Court, men of letters, and such representatives of frailty as Marion de Lorme and Ninon de l'Enclos. The Duc de Noailles tells us, and we can easily believe him, that the morality was less severe and the tone of conversation less chaste at Scarron's house in the Marais than at the Hotel de Rambouillet. Now Scarron was no buffoon of low extraction ; he was not only a fellow of infinite zest and most excellent fancy, who kept the table in a roar, but he came of a good *famille de robe*,¹ and was endowed with some of the finer feelings. Among his ancestors he counted eight counsellors of Parliament ; his father, Paul Scarron, was a counsellor of the High Court ; his uncle Pierre was bishop of Grenoble ; Jean, his cousin, was lord of Vaujours, and one of his female cousins married the Marshal d'Aumont. Scarron himself would have inherited an ample fortune, had not his father married a second time, and conceived a great aversion for him, which was shared by his stepmother ; or, as he himself declares, had he not maintained that Malherbe wrote better verses than Ronsard ; nor must we forget that Scarron the elder declared that his son would never

¹ A family of judges or magistrates. The profession of judge is quite distinct in France from that of barrister.



PAUL SCARRON.

make his fortune because he did not read the Bible. He quitted the paternal roof at the age of thirteen, and went to live with some relations; at the age of fifteen he repaired to Paris to finish his studies, then became an abbé, was everywhere well received, cut a good figure in dancing ballets, playing the lute, and painting, and with his constant good-humour was the life and soul of the parties in the Marais. Scarron appears to have paid a visit to Rome, to have written disrespectfully of the Coliseum, and shortly after his return to France to have become a cripple for life. The good-looking, joyous poet, at the age of twenty-seven, owing to some malady, how contracted is not known, became as grotesque in body as he was in mind. La Beaumelle, whose falsehoods were so sharply exposed by Voltaire, started the legend of the Abbé Scarron at Mons, during the carnival, after having smeared himself with honey, and rolled himself in a feather-bed, making his appearance as a savage, being pursued by the mob, jumping into a river when in a state of perspiration, and thus losing the use of his members. It is pointed out that poor Scarron's malady commenced in 1638, and that he did not go to Mons until 1646. Then curiously enough Scarron himself tells us in comic verse how he became a cripple the year—

Que du très-adorable corps
De notre Reine, que tant j'aime
Sortit Louis le quatorzième.¹

¹ Louis XIV. was born in 1638.

Neither Ménage nor Segrais, the intimate friends of Scarron, nor La Martinière or Chauffpié, his first biographers, say a word of the incident related by La Beaumelle, which may therefore be relegated to the domain of fiction.

It is very probable that excesses, such as hard drinking, brought about a partial paralysis. Scarron himself admits that before he was crippled he drank like a German.

In addition to the wits and poets of the day who visited Scarron, we find the three Villarceaux, the Marechal d'Albert, the Duc de Vivonne, the Marquis de Sévigné, the Comtes de Gramont, Mortemart, Coligny, &c., the Cardinal de Retz, and others. There were fewer ladies, but Scarron used to be carried to see the Duchesses de Lesdiguières and d'Aiguillon, the Marquise de Villarceaux, the Comtesses de Fiesque and de Brienne, Mademoiselle de Hautefort, the favourite of Louis XIII., who procured him an audience with the queen, and other women of quality.

It was a curious accident which brought Scarron and Françoise d'Aubigné together. Scarron was poor, and in constant pain. A friend persuaded him that if he could manage to go to Martinique he would be able to make his fortune, and that the climate would cure him. Colonization was all the rage at that moment. Scarron determined to leave his native land. He wrote to his friend Sarrazin . . . "Adieu, France. Adieu, Paris. Adieu, tigresses disguised as angels. I renounce for ever burlesque verses, *romans*

comiques and comedies, to go to a country where there are no hypocrites, no devout swindlers, no inquisition, no winter which kills me, no chills which cripple me, no war which makes me starve." Scarron learned that a lady living opposite had resided in Martinique, and could tell him all about that island. An acquaintance followed, and Mademoiselle d'Aubigné, in "a short dress and provincial toilette," was one day introduced to the poet and his friends, who were much charmed by her candour and modesty. She was very pretty, very timid, and so nervous that she cried on entering the room. Shortly after this visit Madame d'Aubigné retired to Poitou, where she died, and Françoise found herself once more committed to the care of Madame de Neuillant, who, says Tallemant, left her almost naked through avarice. Now Françoise had left behind her in Paris a friend with whom she corresponded, Mademoiselle St. Hermant, and this friend showed one of her letters to Scarron, who was so charmed with it that he wrote to her himself, as follows—

"Mademoiselle, I was quite sure that the little girl whom I saw enter my room six months ago in a short dress, and who began to cry, I know not why, was quite as clever as she looked. The letter which you wrote to Mademoiselle St. Hermant is so full of intelligence that I am dissatisfied with my own for not having enabled me sooner to recognize all your merit. To tell you the truth, I never could have believed that in the Isles of America, or among the nuns of Niort, *belles lettres* were taught: and I cannot imagine for what reason you took as much care to hide your talent as other people take to display theirs. Now that you are discovered you can have no more objection to write to me than you have to

write to Mademoiselle St. Hermant. I will do all in my power to write as good a letter as yours, and you will have the pleasure of seeing that I have not nearly so much wit as yourself. Such as I am I shall remain all my life, &c."

Mademoiselle d'Aubigné was brought back to Paris, and the Duc de Noailles tells us that "her graces increased with years, and her charms attracted the attention of every one; but she was already possessed of a natural dignity and reserve, which protected her age and her beauty, and which forced every one to approach her with respect." She frequently went to see Scarron, who took pity on her, and even offered her money, so that she might escape from the harshness of Madame de Neuillant, and seek refuge in a convent. Then Scarron thought that, should he go to Martinique, how pleasant it would be to have a companion. He might recover the use of his limbs. In this manner the poor deformed poet allowed the idea of a marriage to grow upon him. As he owned himself, it was a very great poetical license. But, license or no license, he fell desperately in love.

As Françoise d'Aubigné preferred marriage to a convent, in spite of her conversion, she consented to marry Scarron, and the marriage took place in May or June, 1652. The bride, according to Scarron, had an income of four *louis*, two large eyes *forts mutins*, a very handsome corsage, a pair of pretty hands, and a great deal of intellect. When asked by the notary what dowry he accorded his wife, Scarron replied, "Immortality; the names of the wives of kings die

with them, that of the wife of Scarron will live through eternity." Could poor Scarron revisit the glimpses of the moon, he would find Widow Scarron's name quite obliterated by that of Madame de Maintenon. We must note that Françoise d'Aubigné had to borrow her bridal garments from Mademoiselle de Pons, so limited was her wardrobe.

"Endowed with a reserved and delicate mind," says the Duc de Noailles, "and with an innate and exquisite feeling of what was proper, Madame Scarron must have been rather astonished at the tone of the house of which she found herself mistress." After three years of marriage we find that Madame Scarron had "corrected many things." She had gained a complete empire not only over her husband, but over his rather boisterous friends. She gave up none of her religious habits, and, in spite of her youth, knew how to assume an air of dignity, which, while imposing respect, did not interfere with pleasure. Madame de Caylus tells us how one of Scarron's young companions declared that if he had been obliged to choose between taking liberties with the queen and Madame Scarron, "I would not hesitate, I would take liberties with the queen."

Madame Scarron had sometimes to slip away from the company assembled round her husband's chair; but by degrees the tone of that society was greatly improved, and she herself borrowed something both from her husband and from the wits and scholars who kept him company. When Scarron was in pain

she watched over him with womanly devotion, and when he was well she either acted as his secretary, as a critic, or as a pupil. She learned Spanish, Italian, and Latin, and Scarron showed her what works to read. In the opinion of Tallemant des Réaux at this epoch, "Madame Scarron became very amiable, and had a great deal of wit, but was spoiled by applause." That she must have had the talent of pleasing is tolerably certain, and there must have been a great charm in her conversation. Scarron was very badly off; he had just lost a law-suit, and had been obliged to resign his prebend at Mons, which he sold to the *valet de chambre* and secretary of his friend Ménage! The consequence was that there was often not enough for dinner, and the guests had to put up with short commons. It is related that on one of these occasions the servant whispered in the ear of her mistress, "Madame, another story; we have no roast to-day."

Scarron had been in the receipt of a pension before the Fronde, but he had indulged in a Mazarinade—the only one, we are told, which really aroused the wrath of the cardinal—and his pension was withdrawn. Poor Madame Scarron had a hard time of it. Fortunately her husband—husband only in name—held up bravely. Neither poverty, nor suffering, nor law-suits, nor civil strife could quench his inexhaustible flow of animal spirits. Nicholas Poussin says, that during the height of the Fronde he received an order from Scarron for two pictures, one to represent a *bachique* subject. Fortunately the pension was

re-established by Fouquet, and the Scarrons were once more in easy circumstances.

Madame Scarron is said to have been very much liked by several ladies renowned for their talent and virtue, and the Duc de Noailles says that she was much sought after by youth—"and was obliged to oppose a great amount of resistance to the pressing solicitations of the nieces of Mazarin to accompany them to Brouage, where the cardinal sent them, in order to get Marie Mancini out of the way of the young king while negotiations were going on for his marriage with the Infanta." Scarron himself alluded to this subject in a letter to M. de Villette. He wrote—"Madame Scarron is very unhappy in not having enough money and an equipage to go where she would like, when such a piece of good luck is offered as to be invited to Brouage by Mademoiselle de Mancini. . . Paris is as deserted as Brouage is full. I do not notice this in our little house; princes, dukes, and officers of the crown declare that there is no one in Paris; and the ambition to be admitted to our little society begins to be great, and to rage furiously both in town and Court." What if Madame Scarron had gone to Brouage, and had seen Louis XIV. when he went there to take leave of Marie Mancini?

As a proof that Madame Scarron was perfectly virtuous, and in no way deserved the gibes of that arch-calumniator St. Simon, the Duc de Noailles quotes three authorities. The first is Sorbière, who knew Scarron well. He says that "the marriage of

Scarron was not the most gloomy spot in his life. That beautiful person of sixteen years of age, whom he chose to gladden his sight, and with whom he delighted to converse, became its principal ornament. Although her husband was an invalid, although she was young and lovely, her virtue never suffered; and although the persons who sighed for her were the richest and highest in the kingdom, she merited the esteem of all by her exemplary conduct." The next authority is Tallemant des Réaux, who was gifted with one of those whispering tongues which poison truth. Even he could see no ill in Madame Scarron, who, he said, "is well received everywhere, but up to the present it is not believed that she has taken the jump."¹ The third authority, strange to say, is Ninon de l'Enclos, who said years afterwards, when both were old—"Madame de Maintenon in her youth was virtuous, through weak-mindedness; I wished to cure her, but her fear of God was too great." In fact, the whole life of Madame Scarron attests the purity of her conduct.

We have already mentioned how she saw Louis XIV. and his bride enter Paris. A very short time afterwards poor suffering Scarron departed this life as jovially as possible. Having cracked his joke he received the last sacraments, for he had ever lived as a Christian, always observing his religious duties, or at least the outward forms, and hearing mass every Sunday morning. Before dying, he said to his wife—

¹ Overstepped the bounds of decency.

"I leave you without property ; virtue does not give any ; however, be always virtuous."

It has been remarked that during the remainder of the century, and in presence of the brilliant position occupied by Madame de Maintenon, the poor poet was as entirely forgotten as if he had never existed. It seemed as if people wished to respect the epitaph written by himself—

" Passants ne faites pas de bruit,
De crainte que je ne m'éveille ;
Car voilà la première nuit
Que le pauvre Scarron sommeille."

After the death of Scarron his widow received offers of assistance from all sides, and Mazarin was appealed to, but in vain, to re-establish the pension of which Scarron had been deprived. The cardinal could neither forget nor forgive the stinging lampoon which had been aimed at him by the deceased poet ; and yet no one was ever more lampooned, and no one ever took less notice of scurrilous abuse than Mazarin. As a general rule, he held the views afterwards expressed by Beaumarchais in the *Mariage de Figaro*, that "printed abuse has no importance except in places where its circulation is hampered ; that without the liberty of blaming no praise is possible, and that none but little men fear little writings." Mazarin, however, died a year after his refusal, and Anne of Austria bestowed a pension of 2000 francs on the *charmante malheureuse*, as Madame Scarron was called. Being again in easy circumstances, Madame Scarron

returned to the Ursuline convent, where the good nuns say that she saw "a furious number of people, and did not spare them." It is certain that she was also visited by many of the highest persons in the realm.

In 1666 Anne of Austria died, and the Widow Scarron lost her pension. Again came offers of aid—offers from the Duchesse de Richelieu, from the wife of Marshal d'Albret, from the Marquise de Montchevreuil, &c. A number of houses were opened to her. "I thank you with all my heart," she replied, "for the retreat you offer me, but I cannot leave the rue St. Jacques; a life of retirement is alone suitable to the situation to which I have been reduced by the death of the queen. My mourning is very different from that of the Court; I have to weep for a benefactress, for my tranquillity and my happiness."

A short time before the death of the queen, Madame Scarron refused the hand of a wealthy noble who was both old and debauched, and in her destitute position, and seeing that she had married a man like Scarron, her refusal created some little astonishment. To the Duchesse de Richelieu she wrote on this subject—"Madame, I swear to you in the presence of God that, even if I had foreseen the death of the queen, I would not have accepted this match. I love my liberty too much, and have too great a respect for my poverty. My friends are very cruel; they blame me for having rejected the proposals of a man of

wealth and condition, it is true, but devoid of both talent and morality. . .” Strange to say, Ninon de l’Enclos appears to have been the only person who approved of the conduct of Madame Scarron. “Your approbation,” she wrote to Ninon, “consoles me for the cruelties of my friends. . . What do you think of the comparison which they have dared to draw between this man and M. Scarron? Oh, God! what a difference! Without fortune, without health, he drew to my house all the good society of Paris: this man would have hated and repelled it. M. Scarron possessed that jovial character with which every one was acquainted, and a kindness of heart of which few people knew: this man is neither brilliant, sprightly, nor solid; when he speaks he is ridiculous. My husband was good at bottom—I cured him of his licentiousness; he was neither wild nor vicious at heart; his probity was never called in question, and his disinterestedness was without example. . . Assure those who attribute my refusal to another engagement that my heart is perfectly free, wishes to be so, and will always remain so. I have experienced enough of marriage to know that it cannot be delicious, and I find that liberty is.”

After this incident a good many friends treated Madame Scarron with coldness. She addressed two petitions to the king (her future husband), but they were not even read. A few persons promised, in a tone which meant the contrary to what they said, to speak to his Majesty. “Ah!” she exclaimed

one day, "if I were in favour, how differently I should treat the unfortunate."

In her distress Madame Scarron made up her mind to follow Mademoiselle d'Aumale, Princesse de Nemours, to Portugal, whither she was going in order to marry King Alphonso, the idiotic son of John of Braganza.¹ Everything was settled, and Madame Scarron wrote to take leave of her friend Mademoiselle d'Artigny. In this letter she begged, before quitting France, to be presented to Madame de Montespan, who had not yet become the mistress of the king, and who was simply a lady-in-waiting to the queen. The presentation took place, and a few days later Madame Scarron wrote to Madame de Chanteloup, saying that she had decided not to go to Portugal, and mentioned how Madame de Montespan had presented her petition to the king, who had received it kindly, most likely in consequence of the hand which had offered it. The pension was restored; the brevet being made out in these terms—

"Brevet of the king, by which his Majesty, desiring to gratify Dame Françoise d'Aubigné, widow of the Sieur Scarron, as much in consideration of the services rendered by the said Sieur Scarron, as those rendered by the Sieur d'Aubigné, her grandfather, to the late King Henri IV., and also in consideration of the late queen-mother having given Dame Scarron a pension which was paid up to the time of her death, accords to her and makes her a gift of a pension of 2700 livres."

¹ We have referred to this affair in another place.

How strange that the services of the great Protestant champion should have had any weight with the monarch who revoked the edict of Nantes, and otherwise persecuted the members of the reformed religion with such savage and relentless cruelty, when Madame de Maintenon was his friend and counsellor ! And when the services of Agrippa d'Aubigné were thus requited, his granddaughter had embraced the doctrines against which he had constantly struggled.

This brevet, signed by the king and countersigned by Le Tellier, was dated 23rd February, 1666.

Madame Scarron was enchanted with her good fortune. In a letter to Ninon she said—" Marshal d'Albret is my friend for ever ; I do not know that he was ever my lover. When one has been enslaved by you, dear Ninon, one becomes extremely particular. I see him every day, and you know that I can do so without danger. You complain of his absence ; I am too faithful to friendship, and so you must not blame me. Come and sup this evening, and prepare your vengeance. . ."

The above letter shows what a change this gleam of sunlight effected in the existence of Scarron's widow, who was once more able to go into society and to enjoy life. Her name is to be found in the Court Circular of the epoch, sitting at table at Versailles, on the 18th July, 1668, with Madame the Princesse d'Harcourt, Madame de Montespan, Mademoiselle Scudery, &c. However, in a very short time

Madame Scarron grew weary of the world, retired to a deserted part of Paris, and wrote to Ninon to tell the Duc de la Rochefoucauld that she read nothing but the book of Job and the *Maximes*, of which the duke was the author.

We have drawn attention to the *liaison* between the king and Madame de Montespan; the consequences of this attachment were that in 1669 there was a daughter, and in 1670 a son born. It was decided for several reasons, not difficult to imagine, that the birth of these children should be kept a profound secret. Madame de Montespan considered that Madame Scarron, living a secluded life, would be an excellent person to take charge of her adulterous offspring; she knew her to be discreet, active, and devoted, and she had the highest opinion of her capability. Madame Scarron was sounded, and hesitated at first, but at last consented on receiving an order from the king, and being sure that the children were those of Louis XIV. The greatest secrecy was observed with respect to the birth of these children, whose existence people ignored, or feigned to ignore. Five other children followed the two first confided to the care of Madame Scarron. "Their birth," says Madame de Caylus, "was always enshrouded in mystery. When the moment came, Madame Scarron was sent for, and she carried the infant away, concealing it in her scarf, hiding herself behind a mask, and taking a fiacre to return to Paris, being very much alarmed lest the child should cry."

After living a very retired life for some years, Madame Scarron returned to Court, and soon afterwards assumed the name of Madame de Maintenon. There was no longer any necessity for secrecy, as the king had legitimized his illegitimate children. Before long his Majesty, often brought into contact with Madame de Maintenon, who remained charged with the education of his children, took great pleasure in her society ; her conversation interested him in the highest degree. This naturally gave rise to jealousy and heartburning, which were succeeded by squabbles between the Marquise de Montespan and Madame de Maintenon.

In 1680 the dauphin married Marie Anne Victoire, daughter of the Elector of Bavaria, and Madame de Maintenon was appointed mistress of the robes to the dauphiness ; in this way she escaped all further contact with the king's mistress, and acquired a status at Court. On the 17th March, 1680, Madame de Sévigné wrote to her daughter, saying—"The favour of Madame de Maintenon gains ground every day ; the conversations with his Majesty are without end ; he gives the dauphiness all the time that he used to bestow upon Madame de Montespan." Madame de Sévigné then proceeds to retail some Court news, which is curious to read, exhibiting as it does the mixture of profligacy and religion jumbled together in the royal mind. Be it remembered that the adulterous connection with the Marquise de Montespan had not then ceased, and that Madame de

Maintenon was endeavouring to wean the fickle monarch from his wicked ways. The letter continued—"Madame de Fontanges has been made a duchess, with a pension of 20,000 crowns, and is going to pass Easter at an abbey which the king has given to one of her sisters." And a few days afterwards—"The conversations with his Majesty increase; they last from four until ten o'clock. . . . No one approaches the lady without fear and respect, and the ministers pay court to her. . . . She has introduced the king into a new country, I mean that of friendship and conversation, without chicane and without restraint; he appears to be charmed with it."

On her appointment as mistress of the robes the *Mercure Galant* wrote—"As for Madame de Maintenon, one cannot too highly praise this admirable person. Never did woman enjoy a better and more just reputation. . . . She soon had as many admirers and friends as people who saw her. Her virtue always inspired respect. She became the chief friend of the first ladies of the kingdom, and everywhere conducted herself in such a way as to merit the friendship of the whole Court, and the esteem and good graces of his Majesty."

We have seen how the queen died in 1683, from which period the king became more and more devoted to Madame de Maintenon. It is clear that his Majesty wished her to become his mistress, and that she refused. As she wrote herself, she sent him away "always in despair, but never disheartened." At this

epoch several of her friends remarked that she was frequently in a state of violent agitation, then she became suddenly calm.

In 1685 it was noised abroad that Louis XIV. was going to marry the Infanta of Portugal, and that Madame de Maintenon was favourable to the match; and the Marquis de Sourches relates how the king one day on his way to mass said to the grand equerry—"Have you not heard that I have ordered new liveries to be made, and that this is a sure sign that I am going to be married again?" The courtiers, who were aware of the royal method of acting, were convinced by the few words recorded above that it was the intention of the king to re-marry. And there is no doubt either that shortly before or shortly after this date, the *Grand Monarque* condescended to marry the widow of the poet Scarron. Authorities differ as to the date of this marriage. The Duc de Noailles says that it probably took place eighteen months or two years after the death of the queen, when the king was forty-seven years of age and Madame de Maintenon fifty. The marriage appears to have been secretly solemnized in the private oratory at Versailles by the Archbishop of Paris, in presence of Père La Chaise, who said mass, Bontemps, the king's first *valet-de-chambre*, and M. de Montchevreuil, the intimate friend of Madame de Maintenon. No proof of this union has ever been discovered, and the opinion of the Duc de Noailles is that no written act was considered necessary, as the marriage was one of

conscience. The king looked upon secrecy as an absolute necessity due to his crown and his family, and Madame de Maintenon scrupulously respected the wishes of his Majesty, and took the greatest pains to suppress all trace of the ceremony. The Duc de Noailles adds that no one doubted the fact of the marriage, of which there exists proof positive in a letter written to the king in 1697 by the Bishop of Chartres, the spiritual director of Madame de Maintenon. In the letter in question the bishop said—

“Sire, you have an excellent companion, full of the spirit of God, and whose tenderness and fidelity towards you are unequalled. It has pleased God to allow me to see the bottom of her heart, and I can assure you that it would be impossible to love you more tenderly and more respectfully than she loves you. . . . It is very clear, Sire, that Heaven has wished to give you a mate like yourself in according you a wife similar to the strong wife of the Scriptures, who looked after the glory and salvation of her husband, and who wrought all kinds of good works.”

In a letter addressed by the good bishop to Madame de Maintenon the bishop told her to be as submissive to the king as Sarah was to Abraham, and concluded by assuring her that the faithful wife sanctifies the unfaithful husband.

This marriage has been very diversely commented upon. It was considered by St. Simon as “the deepest, the most public, the most durable, the most unheard-of humiliation.” Voltaire took quite another view of the matter. He said that this marriage did not lead the king to do anything unworthy of his rank. It was never acknowledged at Court that

Madame de Maintenon was married. Without being treated as a queen she was respected as the chosen of the king. This appears to have been the general feeling, for we find that Madame de Maintenon, who always behaved with admirable tact, was constantly treated with the greatest consideration not only by the Court but by the royal family.

At the time of her marriage Madame de Maintenon was still a handsome woman; there was a wonderful amount of seduction in her manners; her gait betrayed the goddess, and we are told that a peculiar charm was spread over her whole person. What wonder that Louis XIV., who felt, after having enjoyed her society, that he could not live without her, should have conciliated his inclination and conscience by means of a secret marriage! No purely dynastic marriage was now necessary. The succession to the throne appeared to be assured by the existence of three grandsons;¹ then why should Louis XIV. marry the Infanta of Portugal or any other youthful princess?

We think it may prove interesting here to turn to the correspondence of Madame de Maintenon, which throws a good deal of light upon the events of her time, her position as regards the king, and her religious convictions. A great number of her letters are unfortunately missing. All her correspondence with Louis XIV. seems to have been destroyed, as also the letters she wrote to several members of the

¹ None of which, however, were destined to reign in France.

royal family, and especially to the Dukes of Burgundy and Maine, as well as those to Marshal Boufflers and the Abbé Testu. Concerning this correspondence Horace Walpole delivered the following judgment—

HORACE WALPOLE TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

“STRAWBERRY HILL, *June 6th*, 1756.

“If you have not got the new letters and memoirs of Madame de Maintenon, I beg I may recommend them to you for your summer reading. As far as I have got, which is but into the fifth volume of the letters, I think you will find them very curious, and some very entertaining. The fourth volume has persuaded me of the sincerity of her devotion; and two or three letters at the beginning of my present tome have made me even a little jealous for my adored Madame de Sévigné . . .”

No matter how sincere the devotion of Madame de Maintenon may have been, the share she took in the revocation of the edict of Nantes will always be a stain on her memory. Her apologists have endeavoured to excuse her on several grounds. They say that she recommended moderation, persuasion, and not persecution. They would have us believe that she was ignorant of all the atrocities committed; that when the persecutions began she had very little influence over the mind of the king, who was then in love with Mademoiselle de Fontanges; that when the revocation of the edict of Nantes was signed, if she did not raise her voice against that intolerant act it was because she was a submissive wife, and that she never ventured to oppose the king. Voltaire tells us that Madame de Maintenon never dared to contradict Louis XIV., and acquits her.

It is absurd to suppose that Madame de Maintenon

could have been ignorant of the horrors perpetrated in the name of religion. She took an active part in the conversions accomplished by means of the wheel, the gibbet, and the galleys. She knew that the Protestant schools had been closed, and churches demolished, that Protestant children had been torn from their parents, that thousands of Protestants had been driven from their homes and forced to fly the country, that Protestants could be neither lawyers, nor printers, nor booksellers, nor doctors, nor surgeons, nor apothecaries, and that all the liberal professions were closed to them. We find nothing to show that Madame de Maintenon bewailed these cruelties. She wrote to her brother to take advantage of the *desertion of the Huguenots* to buy an estate in Poitou;¹ she founded the Convent of St. Cyr to receive young girls of noble family who had been *converted*. Missions were sent into the provinces, and money was employed to purchase consciences. Pellisson was the director of this work, and on the 13th November, 1683, Madame de Maintenon wrote—"M. Pellisson performs prodigies, M. Bossuet is more *savant*, but he is more persuasive. We never dared to hope that people would be so easily converted." To other means of persuasion Louvois added dragoons or *missionnaires bottés*.

It is also urged in mitigation of the conduct of Madame de Maintenon, that the revocation of the edict of Nantes was approved of, not only by church-

See letter, 27th September, 1681.

men like Massillon and Bossuet, but by Racine, La Bruyère, and La Fontaine, and even by Madame de Sévigné, Madame Deshoulières, and Mademoiselle de Scudéry. Very few persons escaped its effect; it deprived France of many of her ablest sons, driving them into foreign lands. Here and there only an exception was made. Duquesne, who had done the State much service at sea, was asked by the king to abjure. He was then in his eightieth year. "I have rendered to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's," replied the veteran, "allow me to render to God the things that are God's." And he was permitted to close his eyes in France. It is curious to observe the curt manner in which Madame de Maintenon announced the death of that great minister, Colbert. "M. Colbert died yesterday." But then Colbert "thought of nothing but his finances, and hardly ever of religion."

One of the qualities of Madame de Maintenon was her disinterestedness; she took nothing for herself, and died almost as poor as when Scarron left her a widow. She obtained a moderate pension for a scapegrace of a brother, and gave a helping hand to the Harteloires, poor relations of the deceased Scarron. But when Mademoiselle Harteloire asked to have her pension raised from 400 to 600 francs she refused, but consented to "throw in a few petticoats."

In the matter of her marriage with the king, Madame de Maintenon also exhibited disinterested-

ness. She not only consented to the suppression of all proof of the union, but she never acknowledged it even after the death of Louis XIV. St. Simon would have us believe that she wished to be declared queen; but the fact is that even after her marriage she lived in retirement, and enjoyed no public rank at Court. All she asked was repose for her conscience. Everything else she was ready and willing to sacrifice to the king. She was on very intimate terms with the De Noailles; her niece married the Marquis de Noailles; the Cardinal de Noailles was her spiritual director, but when the Jansenist quarrel arose Madame de Maintenon sided with the king and abandoned the cardinal. Let us now turn to her correspondence, and see a few extracts.

As early as 24th August, 1681, Madame de Maintenon wrote, "The king is beginning to think seriously of his own salvation, and that of his subjects. If God preserves him for us, there will soon be only one religion in the kingdom; this is the opinion of M. de Louvois, and I believe that of Colbert." A few days later she wrote thus to her brother—

TO M. D'AUBIGNÉ.

"FONTAINEBLEAU, 27th September, 1681.

"You will never guess all the trouble I had in arranging your affair, and the difficulties I encountered. However, I am too well recompensed by having afforded you pleasure, and by the thought that you will draw 18,000 livres a year [pension given by the king]. You cannot do better than to buy an estate in Poitou, or near Cognac; property will soon be had for nothing there, owing to the desertion of the Huguenots. . . I greatly rejoice over the

conversion of M. de Vaux ; give him my compliments ; Poignette is a good Catholic ; so is M. de Marmande ; M. de Souché abjured two days ago. I am to be seen constantly taking some Huguenot to church."

M. d'Aubigné appears to have been a sad scamp, who at once spent his 18,000 livres, and wanted a year in advance. Madame de Maintenon refused to ask for this favour, the granting of the pension having made, as she said, a great noise at Fontainebleau. She had some difficulty in keeping her brother away from Court. In the following letter Madame de Maintenon refers to the death of the queen, and her own position with regard to the king.

TO M. D'AUBIGNÉ.

"FONTAINEBLEAU, 7th August, 1683.

"The affliction of every one here, and mine in particular, does not hinder me from replying to your letter. . . . The misfortune of having no children is slight, and I think that you are too sensible to care about your name perishing. The reason which hinders me from seeing you is so useful and so glorious that you ought to be rejoiced at it. It does not suit me to hold any communion with you, and I have advised you, in your own interest, to remain in the prettiest spot in the world, where you live in abundance, and where your fortune is much more considerable than it would be in Paris. . . . You are old [only 49 !], you have no children, you are in bad health ; what can you want beyond repose, liberty, and piety ? . . ."

"At this moment," says Mademoiselle d'Aumale in her Memoirs, "the king wished to have Madame de Maintenon constantly with him ; he detained her at the Court, and allowed her to see no one. During the voyage to Fontainebleau the king gave her the queen's apartment, and councils were held in her

room, where his Majesty transacted most of his business." In fact it is most probable that the marriage was decided upon at this epoch.

In a letter from Versailles, 11th July, 1684, Madame de Maintenon, writing to her brother, thus discreetly refers to her marriage—

"Remember your past existence in order to consider yourself happy, with an income of 30,000 livres, and that my present position does not poison yours, since it is a personal adventure which, as you have well remarked, is not catching.¹ . . . "

In a letter written in August 1684, after the signature of the peace of Nimeguen, Madame de Maintenon says—

"The king proposes to set to work converting the heretics. He has frequent conferences on the subject with Le Tellier, &c. ; they wish to persuade me that I would not be *de trop*. Things must not be precipitated ; we must convert, and not persecute. M. de Louvois is in favour of gentle measures, which are not in accordance with his character. The king is ready to do what will be most useful to religion. This enterprise will cover him with glory in the sight of God and man. He will have caused all his subjects to return to the bosom of the Church, and will have destroyed heresy, which his predecessors could not vanquish."

TO MADAME DE BRINON.

"CHAMBORD, 20th September, 1685.

" . . . Adieu ! I am going to hunt the stag with the king, who, thank God, is almost as well as you wish. Only think, and rejoice that 100,000 souls have been converted in Guienne during

¹ M. Geffroy says in a note (Correspondence of Madame de Maintenon) that " this expression is pleasant, and *bien trouvée*. It proves the marriage ; but the king did not for all that become the brother-in-law of d'Aubigné, although d'Aubigné, says St. Simon, often employed that disagreeable expression." M. Geffroy does not explain how Louis XIV. could marry d'Aubigné's sister and not become his brother-in-law.

last month ; that the town of Saintes has been converted by deliberation ; that my brother addressed the municipal authorities of Cognac, inviting them to follow this example, and that they consented ; that the king sends a great deal of money to increase the number of churches, that he writes every day to the bishops to send missions everywhere to instruct and console, and that he has mass-books distributed. . . .”

Dangeau, 2nd September, 1685, tells us that Montaubon was also converted by deliberation, this decision having been adopted at a meeting held at the town-hall. The dragoons turned out excellent missionaries. Conversions *en masse* also took place at Bordeaux, Montpellier, Nimes, Lyons, &c.

TO MADAME DE BRINON.

“ 25th December, 1686.

“ The king went to *matines* last night ; he heard mass three times to-day, and afterwards went to see *Madame*, and spent a good hour with her. He paid the dauphiness a visit ; he came to the sermon, and was present at vespers. This shows you that he is cured [had been suffering from fistula, and operated upon]. Every one is rejoiced to see him able to go out. Father Bourdaloue preached one of the finest sermons you can imagine. The joy caused by the recovery of the king was depicted on the face of *Madame*. I think you will have no doubt of that.”

The fact is that *Madame*, the Palatine, was supposed to be in love with her husband's brother, the king.

TO MADAME DE BRINON.

“ 21st February, 1690.

“ . . . There is good news from Versailles, for the king enjoys marvellous health, and becomes more holy every day ; piety has become quite the fashion. That God may render it sincere in the hearts of those who profess it ! We are going to Compiègne for a week. I would rather not go ; but we learn from a number of saints, whom we sometimes see, that we must renounce our own wishes and do the will of God with all our heart. *Madame de Marsilly* pretends that this is at present the fashion at St. Cyr.”

The Mademoiselle de Marsilly above mentioned became the second wife of M. de Villette, and afterwards Lady Bolingbroke.

TO THE DUC DE RICHELIEU.

“MARLY, 1st May, 1690.

“It is true that his Holiness has honoured me with a brief, but I am none the better for that, and all these honours are but the consequence of that which the king has done me. . . . You have no doubt heard of the death of the dauphiness; we were long prepared for it; we did not, however, expect it so soon. God grant that she was not taken by surprise. She showed great piety and courage. The king saw her expire after having prayed for an hour at the foot of her bed. There is already some talk of marrying the dauphin.”

The dauphiness lived a most retired life, shutting herself up with her German lady's-maid, Bessola. She died on the 29th April at Versailles, leaving behind her the Dukes of Burgundy, Anjou, and Berri.

TO MADAME DE BRINON.

“2nd February, 1793.

“I go nearly every morning to St. Cyr before daybreak; I find the king in my room on my return, and I have great need of repose when he goes away. These are the only reasons which hinder me from writing to you as often as I should like. Your letters always afford me great pleasure, and, notwithstanding all that I have to do, are read with pleasure from one end to the other.”

TO MADAME DE BRINON.

“28th February, 1693.

“We must expect all kinds of injustice in this world, which wishes to judge everything, and judges wrongly. M. Pellisson lived in the most exemplary manner, and because he did not confess, he is called a Huguenot. No attention is paid to the tenor of a man's life; the great thing is to receive the sacraments when one

is dying. The poor man did not think that he was so ill, and put off sending for the priest. . .”

The terrible rumour had been spread abroad that Pellisson had at the last moment relapsed. Be it remembered that Pellisson, who was one of Fouquet's clerks, was, on the fall of that minister, confined in the Bastille for five years, and his release is supposed to have been more or less connected with his conversion. Pellisson afterwards became a most zealous Catholic, and was appointed historiographer to the king, with a pension. We have already mentioned the part he played in the purchase of consciences.

It is to be remarked that the religious enthusiasm of Louis XIV. cooled down with age, and in 1695 we find Madame de Maintenon in vain endeavouring to persuade the king to indulge in some pious reading, which she said would both instruct and divert him, adding that it was a domestic duty. She wrote on this subject to Cardinal de Noailles, the 27th December, 1695, saying—

“When I reflect that he used to ask me to read the writings of Fenelon to him; that he himself read St. François de Sales; that he used to pray with me, and be so much affected that he wished to and in fact did make a general confession, I expressed myself astonished that all this devotion should have vanished in the space of twenty-four hours, and that since that date he should have never spoken to me about religion. The only reason which he gave in reply was that he was not *un homme de suite*, meaning that he persevered in nothing by taste. I do not consider the king a liar; it is not therefore Père La Chaise who dissuades him from that interchange of piety and prayer which I desired to hold with him, and for which I consented to give myself to him.”

TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS.

“12th September, 1698.

“I have shown all your papers to the king, who told me that he had already been spoken to on the subject of the letter, and that he would not alter his decision. To tell you the truth, the king will not allow any one to speak to him on business but his ministers; he does not approve of the Nuncio having addressed himself to me. Make him comprehend this once for all, I beg of you. I can only at times indulge in general maxims, but I can do nothing in the matter of particular facts, about which I am unable to speak. I should be too well paid for the slavery in which I exist¹ if I could do any good; but I can only groan over the turn which affairs have taken. . .”

What “the papers” referred to we know not; probably to Fenelon, or to Madame Guyon, and the Quietists. The above letter shows, however, that Madame de Maintenon, in the height of her favour, exercised but a limited influence over the royal mind, according to her own account.

Although Madame de Maintenon desired peace, she was enchanted to think that Louis XIV. had accepted the crown of Spain for his grandson, which meant war. She wrote thus to the Duc d’Harcourt at Madrid—

“ST. CYR, 3rd December, 1700.

“We have not yet recovered from the extreme joy which every one feels concerning the decision of the king to accept the crown of Spain for the Duc d’Anjou. Paris is in transports, and from what we hear it is the same in the provinces. We have reached the melancholy moment of this happy affair—the separation, and you know how the French love their princes. The king, full of kindness, cannot, without tears, see his grandson leave him for ever. We flatter ourselves, however, that the duke will one day visit the countries under his rule, and that we shall see him on his road to

¹ See letter, 4th April, 1705.

Flanders;¹ but it is thought that the Spaniards will like to see an heir to the throne before this voyage is undertaken. It is not supposed here that they will give him an Archduchess, but rather the Princess of Savoy. . . .”

TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS.

“ST. CYR, 31st January, 1700.

“. . . The king is not well satisfied with the three *jours gras* which you wish to retrench from the mascarades and balls; but he always ends by saying that he desires to be submissive, and by allowing you to act as you deem fit. I told him that those three days would retrench a great many sins. Religion is very little known at Court, where people wish to arrange it to suit themselves, instead of conforming to it; they indulge in all the external practices of religion, but not in the spirit. The king would not miss a *station* or an abstinence, but he will not understand that it is necessary to humiliate himself, and to assume the spirit of true repentance, and that we should cover ourselves with sackcloth and ashes to demand peace. . . .”

At the end of a long letter addressed to Madame de Glapion, Dame de St. Louis, 21st April, 1704—letter filled with pious sentiments—we find the following paragraph—“They have defeated 1800 Camisards; I shall ask our mother to order a procession to thank God.” Madame de Maintenon had already written to the Comte d’Ayen, who had married her niece—“A great many fanatics have been killed, and it is hoped that Languedoc will soon be purged of them.”²

¹ The War of Succession deprived Spain of Flanders.

² Marshal Villars had been recalled from Germany to put down the Protestant revolt in the Cevennes—revolt produced by the bull of Clement XI. No less than 100,000 persons are said to have perished during that terrible struggle, and in the meantime Marsin lost Germany. Languedoc was covered with gibbets, whole villages were destroyed, and the country laid waste. Neither age nor sex

Madame de Maintenon, in a letter dated the 4th April, 1705, thus describes the state of bondage in which she lived at Court—

“The visits commence at 7.30 a.m. First comes M. Maréchal, the king’s head surgeon, then the doctor Fagon. He is followed by M. Bloin, the first *valet-de-chambre* of the king, to know how I am. I have sometimes letters of great importance to write, and which must be written at this moment. Then arrive people of the greatest consequence: one day M. Chamillart; another the Archbishop; to-day it is a general who is about to start for the army; to-morrow an audience which has been asked for—always persons whom I cannot refuse to see, such, for example, as officers going to leave. The other day the Duc de Maine waited in the ante-room until M. de Chamillart had finished. When he had left, the duke came in and kept me in conversation until the king arrived; there is some little amusement in this; my visitors do not leave my room until driven out by some one of superior rank. When the king comes every one else has to leave. The king remains with me until he goes to mass. Observe that in the midst of all this I am not yet dressed. If I were to dress I should not have time to pray to God. My hair is still arranged for the night; however, my room is like a chapel; there is a kind of procession, and a perpetual coming and going. When the king has heard mass he returns. Then comes the Duchess of Burgundy with a number of ladies, who remain while I dine. . . . There is a circle of ladies round me, so that I cannot ask for anything to drink. I turn round sometimes, and looking at them say—‘You do me great honour, but I should like to see a valet.’ Upon which they all wish to serve me. At last they go to dinner, and leave me Madame d’Hendicourt and Madame Dangeau,

was respected. On the 1st April, 1703, three hundred Camisards were burned alive in a windmill, and Fléchier declared that “this example was necessary to humble the pride of those people.” The Protestants who escaped slaughter lost all their civil rights, which were not restored until 1787, when Louis XVI. issued what was called an Edict of Tolerance. The centenary of the granting of this edict was celebrated through Languedoc in 1887, when a monument erected to the memory of the martyrs and in honour of the liberty of conscience was inaugurated.

who are ill. I might now amuse myself, but generally *Monseigneur* (the dauphin) selects this hour to come and see me ; he is the most difficult person in the world to converse with, because he never says a word. . . . Then we leave table, and the king and all the princesses of the royal family come into my room. We talk, and the king remains about half an hour ; then he goes away, but all the others remain and crowd round me."

After describing the sort of conversation which usually ensued, Madame de Maintenon relates how, when the princesses and other ladies left, there was generally one who remained behind to have a private conversation. One lady had had a quarrel with her husband, another wants something from the king, a third has to contradict a false report, a fourth is in embarrassed circumstances, and so on. Then comes this pious reflection—"All this makes me think sometimes that my existence is very singular, but it must be God who has so ordered it." And further on, Madame de Maintenon explains that whereas Madame de Montespan loved the Court, she detests it. Under these circumstances, what did God do ? He attached to the Court the person who disliked it, and He drove from the Court the person who liked it, apparently for the salvation of both. "To continue," adds Madame de Maintenon, "when the king returns from hunting he comes to see me, the door is closed, and I am alone with him. I must support his grief if he has any, and his melancholy ; sometimes he is not master of himself, and bursts into tears, or finds himself unwell. He has no conversational powers. Sometimes a minister brings him bad news. The king

sets to work. If they wish me to be a third person they call me, and if not I retire and find time for my afternoon prayers. I pray for about half an hour. . . Sometimes I learn that things are going wrong, and that a courier has brought evil tidings. This wounds me to the heart, and prevents me from sleeping.

“While the king continues to write I take my supper, but it does not happen more than once in two months that I can sup at my ease. . . As you may imagine, it is now getting late. I have been up since six o’clock in the morning, and have not had time to breathe. I begin to get weary and to yawn, and then I feel that I am becoming old. At last I feel so fatigued that I don’t know what to do. The king perceives this, and sometimes says to me, ‘You are very tired, are you not? You shall go to bed.’ I go to bed then; my maids come to undress me; but I feel that the king wishes to speak to me, and that he is waiting until they have gone away.”

At last poor Madame de Maintenon manages to get to bed, and the king sits by her pillow, and remains there until he goes to supper. “A quarter of an hour before the king’s supper, the dauphin, with the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy, came to see me. At ten o’clock, or a quarter past, every one leaves. This is how my day is spent.”

In a letter to the Duc de Noailles, Marly, 15th June, 1706, Madame de Maintenon describes the effect created by the loss of the battle of Ramilies by her friend, Marshal Villeroi. However, she says,

“The king supports this reverse with a Christian courage which made people pity him, but which gives great pleasure, however, to those who prefer his salvation to his prosperity in this world. As for myself, I was stunned and stupefied for a time; I have regained courage, and find something of the granddaughter of Agrippa in me. Faith comes to my aid, and shows me the king in the road of the elect, from which few escape without suffering. I avow that the pain of seeing him suffer is great. Our holy cardinal, who might have been my consolation, has become a source of trouble.¹ The family (of de Noailles) do not like me, so I must content myself with groaning at the feet of our Lord. . .”

On the 24th July, Madame de Maintenon wrote to the Duc de Noailles from St. Cyr, saying that the sad tone of his two last letters was suited to the actual condition of France. She added—“I could not support these misfortunes if I did not know whence they come, and that men are but the instruments made use of by God to afflict and humiliate the king and France. One must not reason with Him, saying that the kings whom He appears to abandon are pious, and that our enemies are for the most part heretics. God does not owe us any account of His conduct, which is assuredly just, and even full of kindness, but the manner does not please us. . .”

¹ Madame de Maintenon had been obliged to give up all correspondence with the Cardinal de Noailles, who had become a Jansenist, and had therefore incurred the wrath of the king.

There was bad news from Spain, from Turin, and from Flanders. "The king," continues Madame de Maintenon, "received these three couriers (who brought the despatches) all at once. His condition is like that of Job; God grant that he may have the same patience."

All this is indeed submission to what Madame de Maintenon supposed to be the Divine will.

A good deal has been said about the enmity which is supposed to have existed between the Duke of Orleans (afterwards regent) and Madame de Maintenon. The duke, having Marshal Marsin for his adviser, commanded the French troops which experienced such a crushing disaster under the walls of Turin, at the hands of Eugene. He behaved with great courage, and was wounded in the hip and the arm.

On the 25th September, 1706, Madame de Maintenon wrote to condole with him. She said, among other kind things—

"After so great a misfortune your affliction is a sure proof of your attachment to the king and to the State. As regards yourself, you have every reason to be satisfied but for your wounds. . . The news of what has happened in Italy has afflicted the king and all good Frenchmen. Your valour has surprised even me, but it was so brilliant that it has acquired fresh lustre. . . Now that all the details are known, you have won every heart.¹ . . . It was not your fault. Every one praises your talent, and your docility in listening to the advice of those to whom the king wished you to take counsel. In fact, Monseigneur, you have done your duty; you are not devout, but you are capable of tracing to its source everything which happens to us. It was the will of God to save

¹ It was said that had the duke's plan been followed the disaster would not have occurred.

the Duke of Savoy and to afflict France. You were unable to hinder this, although you were wanting in neither courage nor intelligence. Console yourself, I implore you, and preserve us a prince from whom such great things are expected. . .”

And Madame de Maintenon expressed her regret that she had not found an earlier opportunity of assuring the Duke of Orleans of her veritable attachment.

The Duke of Orleans replied in the following terms—

“BRIANÇON, 10th October, 1706.

“There is no grief, Madame, which would not yield to your consolation. What with the kindness that the king has shown me, and the assurances you give me that there is as much friendship as compassion in it, I should be wrong not to feel tranquil. If your letter had not been filled with praises which I do not deserve, I should pass my life in reading it, for it shows me, with an infinite charm, all the gratitude I owe to the king. Although you desire to hide that which I owe to you, I discover it everywhere, and more especially when you remind me to go to the source of great events. When I am able to say, without hypocrisy, that I am devout, I shall experience the greatest pleasure in confiding the fact to you. Those who are really devout are so true, and so generous, that an honest man is more disposed than another to become so. Continue your kindness, Madame, which affects me in the most lively manner. There is nothing, Madame, which I will not do to preserve it.

“PHILIPPE D'ORLEANS.”

TO THE PRINCESSE DES URSINS.¹

“FONTAINEBLEAU, 25th July, 1708.

“ . . . You know the frivolity of the French. Ghent [just captured] placed us in a position to make peace on our own terms, and now all is lost, and we must sue for it with a rope round the neck. M. de Vendôme, who believes in all he desires, made up his mind to fight a battle, and lost it [battle of Oudenarde]. . . . The king supports this last misfortune, showing great submission to the will of God; he always exhibits the same courage and equani-

¹ Or Orisni, French agent at Madrid.

mity. Wretch that I am, you may easily imagine that I am overwhelmed. . . . Men are not perfect. Never did any one show more good-will than M. de Vendôme, nor more attachment to the royal family and to the State. We are told that he exposed himself more than any one else ; but he is too confident, lazy, obstinate, and given to despise the enemy. Prince Eugene is not an enemy to be despised ; he knows M. de Vendôme, and will take advantage of his defects. . . .”¹

In the following letter Madame de Maintenon gives an account of the sufferings caused by the War of Succession.

TO MADAME DE GLAPION.

“ *September 1708.*

“ . . . My mind is filled with thoughts of Spain almost lost, peace further off than ever, distress on all sides ; a thousand persons who suffer under my eyes, and no power to relieve them ; along with piety all kinds of excesses reign, drunkenness, gluttony, and unbridled luxury, &c. Religion appears to be in great danger. I know not whether to urge the king to push matters to a certain point or to moderate him, for an over severe conduct may create bitterness ; excite a revolt, or cause a schism. On the other hand, who can tell whether God will approve of this human prudence and the policy of mankind, where the interests of the Church are concerned. All this causes me the most inconceivable anxiety. . . .”

In a letter to Marshal Villars in April 1709, Madame de Maintenon said—

“ Our only hope is in you. You lead us to believe that we shall have another army ; it will be commanded by you ; and perhaps God wished to bring us to this point in order to show how He can change the face of events when He pleases. However, joined to the misfortunes of war, we have now famine to fear, scurvy at the Hôtel-Dieu [a hospital], and the plague at the Invalides.”

¹ It was suspected that Vendôme allowed himself to be beaten at Oudenarde in order to damage the reputation of the Duke of Burgundy.

And on the 29th of the same month Madame de Maintenon writing to the Princesse des Ursins said—

“You think that we ought to perish sooner than surrender; I think that we must yield to force, to the arm of the Lord which is visibly against us, and that the king owes more to his people than to himself. . . . The shrine of St. Geneviève is to be uncovered, and public prayer offered up. Beg all your saints to intercede with God to appease His wrath against us. He at present afflicts three very pious kings.”¹

On the subject of the proposition of the *triumvirs*, that Louis XIV. should furnish troops to dethrone his own grandson in Spain, Madame de Maintenon wrote—

TO THE DUC DE NOAILLES.

“ST. CYR, 9th June, 1709.

“ . . . When it was known that the king had refused the insulting propositions of peace which the enemy made to M. de Torcy, every one applauded, and demanded war; but this enthusiasm did not last. You may remember how often you heard people say while you were here, ‘Why leave us our silver plate?—the king would please us by taking it all.’ Since the most zealous have given an example, all is consternation and murmuring. It is said that it is the king who ought to begin by retrenching; all his items of expenditure are complained of; his visits to Marly ruin the State; they wish to deprive him of his horses, his dogs, his valets; his furniture is attacked, and in fact they wish to despoil him of everything. Murmurs are heard at his door. They wish to stone me to death, because they think that I tell him nothing which is disagreeable for fear of making him unhappy. And yet the king has cut down his expenses at Marly, has sent his gold plate to the Mint, and has given his jewels to M. Demaretz, to see if he can pawn them.”

And such was the partial result of one of those big wars which make ambition virtue! No wonder

¹ His Most Christian Majesty of France, his Most Catholic Majesty of Spain, and the Defender of the Faith, James III. of England.

that Louis on his death-bed repented him of the error of his ways, of his sanguinary and costly campaigns, and other extravagances.

The following letter was written on the eve of the battle of Malplaquet—

TO MADAME DE PERON.

"10th September, 1709.

"The armies are in presence of each other in Flanders; a courier arrived at five a.m. to announce this to the king. Set all the convent to prayers, I implore you, and go to ten o'clock mass to offer up a holy sacrifice, and ask God to protect us. Do not forget to pray to the Holy Virgin."

And after the news of the defeat, Madame de Maintenon, in a letter to the Duc de Noailles, said that Marshal Boufflers had exhibited the courage of a lion, that D'Artagnan had three horses killed under him, and greatly distinguished himself, and that the King of England (the Pretender) was present in spite of a fever, and performed marvels.

Madame de Maintenon wrote a long and pathetic description of this disaster, which neither courage, genius, nor prayer could avert, to Madame des Ursins. This letter is so far important, that we find Madame de Maintenon hinting that France might be obliged to throw Spain over. She wrote—

"There is nothing for us, Madame, but peace; the famine augments every day. . . We shall all die of hunger this winter unless the sea becomes free for the importation of corn; this is the only way of lowering the price of our own, and re-establishing abundance. We run the chance of having no corn for seed, and should this misfortune happen the famine will be perpetuated for several years. God declares Himself so visibly that it would be to resist Him not to

wish for peace, and you know better than I do that the welfare of the people is the first duty of the king. . . .”

TO THE COMTESSE DE CAYLUS.¹

“ October 1709.

“ . . . I have for my share a great many poor people : Mademoiselle d’Aumale cried to-day over what she saw around me. One sees people who will not listen to reason, and who are driven to desperation by want : we shall soon be unable to venture out in safety. I yesterday learned that the . . . who are well connected on all sides, have for three months been living on oaten bread. . . .”

And in another letter dated “St. Cyr, 25th Nov., 1709,” while lamenting that there seemed no prospect of peace, Madame de Maintenon wrote—

“ Preparations are being made for the next campaign, as well as the scarcity of money and of corn will permit ; I expect with confidence some miracle in favour of Spain. If anything can be deserved from God, I should say that the innocence and virtue of the king and the queen (of Spain !) merit a recompense. I did not dare to show your letter, for there is a great objection here to ladies meddling with affairs ! . . . How can you say that God has not declared against us when He sends us such a winter as has not been seen for five or six hundred years, which freezes all the corn and vines, which leaves us no fruit, not only for the present, but which kills the trees ? The olives in Provence and in Languedoc, the chestnuts in Limousin, the nut-trees all through France, are lost for many years to come. We see the poor dying of hunger without being able to aid them, because the land produces nothing, and because the favours of the king are no longer paid. . . .”²

On the 16th April, 1711, Madame de Maintenon wrote a most touching account of the death of the dauphin to Madame des Ursins. When she arrived

¹ A niece of Madame de Maintenon, who had consented when a child to turn Roman Catholic on condition of being allowed to attend the king’s mass every day, and to be whipped no more.

² Not even the pension of the Queen of England.

in the dauphin's cabinet, Père le Tellier had just given him absolution. She found "the king was seated on a sofa; he did not shed a single tear, but he shuddered from head to foot; the Duchesse de Bourbon and the Princesse de Conti (who belonged to the dauphin faction) were in despair; all the courtiers maintained a silence which was only broken by sobs and cries each time it was supposed that he was dying. The king had entered the dauphin's bedroom three or four times before I had arrived, to see if the moment had come for introducing Père le Tellier to administer the extreme unction. . . . As soon as the dauphin breathed his last his body became purple, and it was necessary to bury him without ceremony. There will be no *post-mortem*; the remains will be taken away in his carriage; a first gentleman of the chamber, a chaplain, twelve guards, and twelve torches will accompany them. On arriving at St. Denis they will be placed in the vault, and there terminates all this greatness!"

TO THE PRINCESSE DES URSINS.

"ST. CYR, 30th Nov., 1711.

" . . . The Dutch are beginning to change their ideas: Philip V. will sit on the throne of Spain, and his amiable descendants also. I always expected a miracle in his favour. . . . I still hope, old as I am, to see the King of England regain his kingdom.

"What glory, Madame, for our king to have carried on a war for ten years against all Europe, to have undergone all kinds of misfortunes, a famine, and a sort of plague, which swept away millions of souls, and to see all this ending in a peace which secures the Spanish monarchy in his family, and re-establishes a Catholic king . . ."

France had to wait some years longer for peace and the miracle, but both came at last. When peace was signed in 1713, Philip was allowed to retain his crown, and his "amiable descendants" still reign at Madrid, having survived, on the throne, the Bourbons of France, Naples, and Parma.

No sooner had the small-pox, which played such havoc in the royal family in 1711 and 1712, begun to diminish than a peculiarly malignant type of measles made its appearance (*rougeole pourprée*) which the doctors did not know how to treat. One can judge of the consternation which reigned in Court and city by the following letter from Madame de Maintenon to the Princesse des Ursins.

"7th February, 1712.

"I know not how I shall have the force to describe all the horrors by which we are surrounded. The measles are making great ravages in Paris. A young man named Vigno, whose bold play was well known to all the Court, died suddenly yesterday; the Chevalier d'Hautefort followed him closely; M. de Gondrin was buried yesterday evening; his wife has the measles, a continuous fever, and a dead child in her bosom. The Duc de la Tremouille has an inflammation of the lungs and the measles; he is lodged very near the dauphiness (the Duchess of Burgundy), but the king does not wish him to be moved in consequence of the cold in his chest. Madame de la Vrillière has the measles, and we are all in the midst of bad air after having fled from it (to Fontainebleau) all the summer to avoid it. The dauphiness has an inflammation, and suffers from a fixed pain between the ear and the upper part of the cheek-bone; she gets convulsions; she screams like a woman in child-bed; she was bled twice yesterday, and three times took opium. . . . After having taken a fourth dose of opium, chewed and smoked tobacco, she felt better. . . ."

The unfortunate dauphiness died. It was with

difficulty that her husband, who insisted upon remaining with her day and night, could be torn from her bedside to get a breath of air. At last he himself caught the fatal disease, as did his little sons, to the great grief and consternation of the king, already so sorely tried. The dauphin and the dauphiness died, and so did the Duke of Brittany. The infant destined to become Louis XV. alone survived.

TO THE PRINCESSE DES URSINS.

“*VERSAILLES, 27th March, 1712.*

“It is true, Madame, that I am sad; nobody ever had greater cause. Everything is wanting; there is a great void, no more joy, no occupation. The king does all he can to console himself, and always relapses. He confides his sorrows to me, and thus greatly augments my own. However, his health continues to be good, and he neglects no business. Our little dauphin¹ lives in spite of every one (*sic*); I have not yet been able to make up my mind to see him. However, I should feel his death less than that of the one we have lost, and who so strongly resembled the dauphin. . . .”²

TO THE PRINCESSE DES URSINS.

“*FONTAINEBLEAU, 17th July, 1712.*

“We receive none but satisfactory news concerning the peace. Every one thinks that we shall arrange matters with England in the course of a few days, and that a general peace will be signed before the end of the year.³ . . . I can easily believe, Madame, that what the King of Spain declared in his council gave rise to a scene both heroic and tender.⁴ Our age has witnessed some which

¹ Who was to be Louis XV., now two years old.

² The dauphin, the dauphiness, Duke and Duchess of Burgundy, and their eldest son, eight years old, died one after the other, and were borne to St. Denis together.

³ Was not signed for two years to come.

⁴ This alludes to a solemn declaration made by Philip V. that he had renounced the French crown, and would never abandon his faithful Spaniards.

would be considered too fabulous in romance. I was a witness the other day of the adieux of our king with his Britannic Majesty. The king spoke to him in the most admirable manner, assured him of his friendship, told him that he would render him all the service in his power, and ended by exhorting him to remain faithful to his religion.¹ The great king is an excellent preacher. The King of England replied perfectly, and recommended the queen, his mother, in the most touching way to his Majesty. . .”

TO THE PRINCESSE DES URSINS.

“VERSAILLES, 4th February, 1714.

“It is not astonishing, Madame, that Madrid and all Spain should be in tears ; but it is surprising that honest people here should be so afflicted for a princess whom they never saw.² People are continually sending for news, and one of my women told me that a valet, on leaving mass, ran up to her in the chapel, exclaiming, overcome with joy, ‘They say that our Queen of Spain is better.’ The letters received here make all who read them weep. M. Fagon approves of woman’s milk ; but I fear that the queen will conceive a dislike for a nourriture insipid in itself. The Duc de Richelieu saved his life with this remedy ; he was suckled by two buxom women forty-five years ago, when he was nearly that age, and he is still alive. . .”

At last poor Louis himself fell ill, and must die.

TO THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND.

“VERSAILLES, 21st August, 1715.

“. . . The illness of the king diminishes a little, in so far that he is not so thirsty, and that he is stronger on his legs. He has no fever ; he has not much appetite ; he sleeps very well, but he perspires too frequently, and that weakens him. The doctors of Paris and of the Court have agreed on a *régime* which it will be

¹ England, as a prelude to the negotiations of Utrecht, insisted on the Stuarts being banished from France.

² The princess who was ill was the Queen of Spain, the daughter of the Duke of Savoy, and the sister of the Duchess of Burgundy ; she was exceedingly popular in Spain. She died on the 14th February, 1714, leaving three children.

difficult for him to follow. I mentioned your Majesty as an example, but he is a bad patient and will not submit to advice. . . He held two cabinet councils to-day, and in the evening there was music, to which I invited all the ladies accustomed to be present. . .”

Ten days after the date of the above letter the king expired.

Madame de Maintenon has been accused of having deserted the king on his death-bed. The *Mémoires des Dames de St. Cyr* and Dangeau agree that she watched him night and day. On Monday the 26th August she was on her knees praying at the foot of his bed while the doctor was dressing his sore; he begged her to leave him and not to return, as her presence affected him too much. She returned, but the king said as there was no cure he wished to die in peace. On the 27th she was with the king all day; on the 28th she went to St. Cyr to sleep; on the 29th she was in the king's room nearly all day; on the 30th Louis XV. sank into a state of lethargy, and in the evening Madame de Maintenon left and did not return. In the *Journal de la Régence*, by Jean Buvat, one finds that “on the 30th the king was much worse. Having sent for the princesses and ladies of the Court, he bid them adieu for ever, and also to Madame de Maintenon, who was enjoined to retire at once to St. Cyr.”

The king died on the 1st September, and it must be remembered that Madame de Maintenon was then eighty years of age. She had been married to the king for thirty years.

Louis XIV. on his death-bed is reported to have said to Madame de Maintenon—"What is to become of you? for you have nothing. She reflected that seeing the uncertainty of her treatment by the princes, she ought to ask the king to recommend her to the Duke of Orleans, and this the king immediately did in these words, which the duke repeated—

"My nephew, I recommend Madame de Maintenon to you. You are aware of the consideration and esteem I have for her. She has given me nothing but good advice; I would have done well to follow it. She has been useful to me in everything, but especially as regards my salvation. Do for her all that she asks—for herself, for her relations, for her friends, and for her allies; she will not abuse your kindness."

The Duke of Orleans acted up to the intentions of his uncle, and Madame de Maintenon was not allowed by the regent to die in want.

Ten days after the death of the king Madame de Maintenon wrote—

TO THE PRINCESSE DES URSINS.

"MARLY, 11th September, 1715.

"It was very kind of you, Madame, to have thought of me during the great event which has just happened; there is nothing to be done but to bow the head beneath the hand which has smitten us.

"I wish with all my heart, Madame, that your state was as happy as mine. I saw the king die like a hero and a saint. I have retired from the world, for which I had no affection. . ."

After the death of Louis XIV., Madame de Maintenon, led a most retired life. On the 7th November,

1715, she wrote to her niece, the Comtesse de Caylus, saying—"You and Madame de Dangeau can come alone; as for myself, I have nothing more to do with the world. . . Yesterday I saw the Duc du Maine; you announce the visit of the Cardinal de Rohan. The Queen of England writes that she will come and see me as soon as possible. The Marshal de Villeroy again presses me to receive him. This is not leading a secluded life. Every visit I receive awakens painful souvenirs, and is sure to make me ill. . ."

In a letter written to her niece two years later, Madame de Maintenon said—"The Czar came here at seven; he sat by my bed, and asked me if I was ill. I replied that I was. He asked what was the matter with me. I answered, 'Great age, and a feeble constitution.' He did not know what to say. His visit was very short. . . I forgot to tell you that the Czar had the foot of my bed (probably the curtains) opened to see me: you may imagine how well satisfied he was."

Voltaire says that before leaving France Peter the Great wished to see the celebrated Madame de Maintenon, whom he knew to be the widow of Louis XIV., and who was near her end. There was a conformity between the marriage of Louis XIV. and his own which excited his curiosity; but there was this difference between the King of France and him: while he had publicly married a heroine, Louis XIV. had secretly married an amiable woman.

TO THE COMTESSE DE CAYLUS.

“20th December, 1717.

“. . . Madame de Montespan went to harness six mice to a little chariot in flagree work, and allowed her pretty hands to get bitten. She kept pigs and goats in painted and gilded chambers. The king used to show her to his ministers, complaining of the *badinage* (chaff) of the Mortemarts; but she was aware of all the State secrets, and gave very good and very bad advice, according to her passions. . .”

In 1719, when Madame de Maintenon died, all kinds of fables were invented with regard to the wealth she was supposed to have left behind her. Several letters show the absurdity of these reports, but it will be sufficient to quote one written by the Duchesse de Lude, which runs thus—

“You can well imagine, my dear cousin, that when one has lived sixteen years with a person as estimable as Madame de Maintenon, that her loss greatly affects one. . . It was found that her whole fortune consisted of 16,000 francs in money, which she shared between Madame de Caylus and Madame de Mailly, and 12,000 francs worth of plate. She left the gold plate to Madame de Caylus, something to Madame de Mailly, and the rest and a bed of red damask to Madame d’Aumale. Her landed estates were given to M. de Noailles by marriage contract. As for precious stones she had a ring worth about 12,000 francs given to her by the late king, which she made a present of to the Duchesse de Noailles. Two or three months ago she begged the regent, when she died, to give Madame de Caylus a pension of 10,000 francs out of what she had. As for St. Cyr it remains as it was. . .”

CHAPTER III.

REGENCY.

No sooner was Louis XIV. dead than all the grand dignitaries of the State flocked to see the Duke of Orleans and to hail him regent. He was urged by his friends to accept the title, to notify it to the Parliament, and to seize upon the reins of power without any other formality. The Duke of Orleans rejected this advice; he summoned the Parliament and went to do homage to the infant monarch, Louis XV. Louis XIV. was right in supposing that his will would be treated with no more ceremony than that of his father.

On the 2nd September the Duke of Orleans, the legitimate princes, the legitimized princes, the great officers of the crown, and the peers repaired to the Parliament in order to hear the will of Louis XIV. read. Louis XIV. in a codicil had ordered de Villeroi to install the young king at Vincennes, and to take him to the Parliament when the will was withdrawn from the iron safe in which it had been deposited. No notice was taken of this injunction. "The French Guards and the Swiss Guards," says Lemontey, "surrounded

the House of Parliament. (Their colonels having been bought over.) Villeroi, de Guiche, Contades, Reynolds, and St. Hilaire directed in favour of the Duke of Orleans all those measures which Louis XIV. had prescribed to be taken against him. D'Agnesseau and Fleury had composed speeches for the occasion. The English ambassador (Lord Stair) exhibited in a tribune the appearance of a credit which he did not possess. The great hall and the vestibules were invaded by a crowd of disguised officers and adventurers of which great cities are the rendezvous. Most of them had arms hidden under their clothes, but without any preconceived design. . . ."

We find that the Duke of Orleans had no need of the services of these unprejudiced gentlemen, and that hardly any opposition was offered to his accession to a real and effective Regency on the part of the Duc du Maine and his friends. The Marshal de Villars and all the principal dukes and peers promised the Duke of Orleans their support, as did d'Argenson the lieutenant of police, St. Hilaire who commanded the artillery, and even the Duc de Noailles, the nephew by alliance of Madame de Maintenon, who herself was of course devoted to the Duc du Maine. In addition to this, Philippe had on his side the people, who were weary of the yoke of Louis XIV., who were eager for a change, and who had had enough of religious austerity and religious persecution. "The Duke of Orleans," says Henri Martin, "did not deserve any credit for refusing the money, the

soldiers and the ships offered to him by George I. of England, through his ambassador, Lord Stair. He refused them because they were not required."

The Duke of Orleans, as was only to be expected, was received with every symptom of respect by the Parliament, but this did not prevent him from being exceedingly troubled when he rose to address the assembly. His address, or message, was skilfully conceived if its sincerity was doubted. He put into the mouth of the late king words which he is supposed never to have pronounced.¹ However, on his side, he promised a wise, economical, and "repairing" Government, and he completely won over the Parliament when he announced his intention to restore the right of remonstrance, and when he spoke in high terms of the Duke of Burgundy, whose liberal notions of government were well known to the Assembly.

The famous will was now brought in and read by a counsellor called Dreux, "in a low and rapid manner, no one condescending to listen;" it was received with the silence of disapprobation. When Counsellor Dreux had terminated, the Duke of Orleans protested against "an act wrung from

¹ The following are the words which the Duke of Orleans pretended were addressed to him by Louis XIV. on his death-bed—"I recommend the dauphin to you; serve him as faithfully as you have served me, and do what you can to preserve his kingdom for him. You will be the master, and the crown belongs to you. I have made the wisest arrangements in my power; but as it is impossible to foresee everything, if there is anything that is objectionable it can be changed."

the late king contrary to his real intentions," and claimed the Regency by right of birth and the laws of the kingdom—an independent and effective Regency without any Duc du Maine to command the household troops and to watch over the person of the king. And the Duke of Orleans, so recently shunned as if he had been plague-stricken, was now proclaimed regent by acclamation, no vote being deemed necessary. Having manifested the desire, in the words of *Télémaque* to be left free to do good and to have his hands bound to prevent him doing evil, he was accorded almost absolute power, with the right of naming and of dismissing the members of the Council.

Lemontey tells us that the people were intoxicated with delight, that the applause of the Assembly was re-echoed by a tremendous crowd which filled the streets round the *Palais de Justice*, where the Parliament sat, and that if the regent had asked for the throne it would have been accorded. As for the Duc du Maine, "pale and trembling" he bent before the storm. And thus was destroyed the will of Louis XIV., "with less formality than would have been necessary for the cancelling of a lease for an acre of land."

The regent, on leaving the *Palais de Justice*, repaired to Versailles to see the king, his journey thither being delayed by the crowds which thronged the road in order to applaud him—crowds led to believe that taxes would be diminished. Although

acclaimed regent by the Parliament, the Duke of Orleans wished his high office to be further confirmed, and proposed that a bed of Justice should assemble at the *Palais de Justice* on the morning of the 7th September ; but during the night the youthful monarch became so ill that it was considered imprudent to take him to Paris. The Duke of Orleans was greatly alarmed, for he knew that if anything were to happen to the king, he would be accused of having poisoned him. However, five days later his Majesty, though still pale and weak, was able to go to the Parliament and to play his part.

We read in the journal of Dangeau that the king, who had merely been attacked by a slight cold, had no sooner recovered than he entered upon his royal duties. The journal treats us to such Court intelligence as follows—

“Tuesday, 24th September, Vincennes.—The king at 11 a.m. received the Dutch ambassador, who wished him a longer reign than that of the late king, but more quiet. . . .

“Wednesday, 25th September, Vincennes.—The king takes a walk every day, and during one of his walks they showed him Bercy, a magnificent and charming house. . . .

“Thursday, 26th September, Vincennes. — The king this morning gave an audience to the deputies of Languedoc. The Bishop of Nimes acted as spokesman. . . .

“Saturday, 28th September, Vincennes.—The

Council of Regency met for the first time this afternoon. . . . An arm-chair was placed at the head of the table in case the king should wish to be present. . . .

“Tuesday, 1st October, Vincennes.—The king is getting stronger and is in excellent health; but as the bad weather is approaching, it is thought that it will be better for him to pass the winter at the Tuileries. . . .

“Saturday, 19th October, Vincennes.—The king is in very good health here, and improves every day both in mind and in polished manners. . . .

“Sunday, 3rd November, Vincennes.—The king continues to enjoy perfect health, and will not be taken to Paris until the frost sets in, on account of the bad air and the amount of small-pox which reigns there. . . .

“Monday, 30th December, Paris.—The king left Vincennes and came here after dinner. He arrived at three o'clock, and was harangued by the city authorities. He was in the back of the carriage between the Duke of Orleans and the Duchesse de Ventadour. Disputes arose about the other places. . . . The late king would have been much astonished could he have seen his successor enter Paris in pomp for the first time in this manner.

“Tuesday, 31st December, Paris.—The king is quite well, and shows great delight at being in Paris. . . .”

And so the Court Journal of the epoch went on for

more than another year, at the end of which time Louis XV. was taken out of the hands of the Duchesse de Ventadour and confided to Marshal Villeroi, an event thus chronicled by Barbier—

“Monday, 15th February, 1717.—The king was in good spirits when he got up; but when the Duke of Orleans arrived, and when Madame de Ventadour handed over the precious *dépôt* which had been confided to her, and kissed the king's hand on taking leave of him, he threw his arms round her neck, kissed her tenderly, and burst into tears. Madame de Ventadour told him to listen to reason. ‘Ah! mamma,’ he replied, ‘there is no such thing as reason when it comes to being separated from you.’

“His Majesty, who was very sad for several days and could eat no dinner, was then handed over to the care of the Marshal de Villeroi.”

By a series of acts, to which we shall briefly refer, the regent first of all set himself to undo what Louis XIV. had so laboriously accomplished. Animated in a great measure by personal motives, he made an enemy of Spain, and declared war against the grandson of Louis XIV. Then by means of further matrimonial alliances he proposed to re-establish friendly relations with Philip V. When he took over the Government of France he was at first much embarrassed as to how he should act towards England; whether he should aid the Jacobite rising in Scotland, or ally himself with George I. While in this state of indecision he favoured his Britannic Majesty with soft

speeches and fine promises, and at the same time allowed the Pretender to pass through France on his way to Scotland.

Lord Stair told him openly, says St. Simon, that two usurpers who were also neighbours ought to support each other mutually against all comers, since they were both in the same case; George I. as regarded the Pretender, and the Duke of Orleans as regarded the King of Spain, should the delicate child who was the successor of Louis XIV. die.

On the one hand the regent was loth to ally himself with the enemies of France, but on the other hand, although, as St. Simon says, he did not even desire the death of Louis XV., he knew that in the event of his death Philip V. would dispute his right to the French throne. The regent therefore looked upon the King of Spain as his most dangerous enemy. It is true that Philip V. had renounced his rights to reign in France with reversion to the Orleans branch, and had declared to the Cortes that nothing would induce him to desert his faithful Spaniards; but Philip was also swayed by other motives; he hated the Duke of Orleans; he was a bigot, the Duke of Orleans was a scoffer; he was a faithful husband, the Duke of Orleans lived a life of debauch, and was even accused of incest. Philip believed the regent to be guilty of all the crimes imputed to him. Directly he heard of the death of Louis XIV. he wished to cross the Pyrenees at the head of an army to claim the Regency; and if he had had an army, and the

energy necessary for the occasion, he would have acted in accordance with his desire. He had persuaded himself that his act of renunciation was invalid, that he had not even the power to renounce his rights, and he was quite prepared to hand over the crown of Spain to his eldest son, and to place that of France on his own head. Philip, too, wished to recover the provinces in Italy, which had been wrested from Spain. His second wife, Elizabeth Farnese, encouraged him in these and other ambitious dreams, being seconded by the Abbé Alberoni, a man who had risen from a low estate, and had by degrees revealed an amount of genius which placed him, says Henri Martin, half way between Richelieu and Mazarin. He was an Italian, equally devoted to Spain and to Italy; bent upon regenerating the land of his adoption, and on freeing the land of his birth from the Austrian yoke. In furtherance of those objects important commercial concessions were promised to England, if she, on her part, would promise to defend Italy, should Italy be attacked by the emperor, who still claimed to be Charles III., King of Spain, in spite of the treaties of Utrecht, Rastadt, and Baden.

Opposed to the Abbé Alberoni was the Abbé Dubois, the son of an apothecary in the little town of Brives-la-Gaillarde, who had been educated by charity in a Paris college. He afterwards became a tutor, and thanks to the introduction of the Chevalier de Lorraine, the infamous favourite of the

regent's father, he became tutor to his son, and from that time until his death remained his familiar demon. He had managed to ingratiate himself with the Court by persuading Philip of Orleans to marry Mademoiselle de Blois, and this service naturally rendered him distasteful to Philip's mother, who implored her son, when he became regent, never to employ *ce fripon d'Abbé Dubois; le plus grand coquin qu'il y ait au monde*. "He was endowed," says Henri Martin, "with all the vices of the heart, and all the qualities of the mind. Sparkling with *verve* and malice, gifted with a flexible, penetrating, and extensive intelligence, and a surprising faculty for work, he was low, corrupt, and false; he believed neither in principle, virtue, in moral or religious faith. . . . And he moulded his pupil as well as he could in his own image." St. Simon and Lemontey have both drawn pen and ink portraits of the future cardinal, not over flattering. The first credits him with all the vices—"perfidy, avarice, debauchery, ambition, base flattery, all struggling for mastery. . . . An odour of falseness issued from all his pores." Describing him as he was in 1715, Lemontey says "that he was of mean appearance, fair hair, that he had a face sharp and impudent as that of a fox. He was sixty years of age, his health was ruined, his fortune mediocre, and his reputation so bad as to defy envy to blacken it. He was always in the company of the Duke of Orleans, in his studies, in his orgies, and even on the field of battle. . . . He

had a taste for science, possessed wit of an original character, and a vast fund of literary information. He was inferior to the nobles as far as his origin went, and their equal as regarded morality. He displayed great constancy in his views, and great force of judgment. . . .”

Such was the Abbé Dubois, who had formerly accompanied Marshal Tallard on an Embassy to London, where he had ingratiated himself with Stanhope, and who now had gone to the Hague to meet Townshend and Stanhope, who were accompanying George I. in a trip to Hanover, with the view of forming a triple alliance between France, England, and Holland. What the regent wanted was a guarantee that, in the event of the death of Louis XV., Philip V. should not be allowed to reign in France. England demanded that Mardyke should not be turned into a nest of corsairs to replace Dunkirk, that the Pretender should be banished, and no aid or asylum afforded to the Jacobites. Holland required certain commercial reforms.

During the negotiations, which were brought to a successful issue, Dubois endeavoured to persuade the English negotiators to induce their master to renounce the title of King of France. In this he not only failed, but the English declined to accord Louis XV. any other title but that of His Most Christian Majesty.¹

¹ Edward III. claimed the crown of France, and adopted the motto *Dieu et mon Droit* in right of his mother Isabelle, surnamed

Dubois displayed great skill in concluding the triple alliance, and the regent, on the recommendation of the King of England, rewarded him by making him Foreign Minister.¹ Dubois wrote to Lord Stanhope, thanked him for this service, and declared that he would always hold the interests of his Britannic Majesty sacred, and kept his word, receiving from England a pension of 50,000 crowns. One morning he said to the regent—"Monseigneur, I dreamt that you made me Archbishop of Cambray." "You, a bishop!" exclaimed the regent, who treated him to some home truths; then he yielded, as was his custom, laughing at the impudence of the man he despised. It is sad to be obliged to add that Massillon and another bishop vouched for the morality of the postulant, who received all his orders in one day, and profaned by his presence the see which Fénelon had recently adorned by his virtues. Shortly afterwards he became cardinal, by

the *Belle*, daughter of Philip IV., who married Edward II. at Boulogne in 1308. The title of "King of France" was not dropped by the English monarchs until the 1st January, 1801, when George III. became King of Great Britain and Ireland. In addition to George I. pretending to be King of France, and James III. pretending to be King of England; the Emperor of Germany pretended to be Charles III., King of Spain, Philip V. pretended to be next in succession to the throne of France, and persisted in calling his old rival for the throne of Spain, the Emperor Charles, the Archduke.

¹ De Gourville says that Dubois landed in England, a worthy ambassador of the Regency, with the gold plate of Louis XIV. for representing, a comic poet (Destouches) to act as secretary, rich stuffs from Lyons wherewith to "persuade" ladies in credit, and a large stock of licentious stories wherewith to amuse the king.

paying eight millions, and in 1723 the Assembly of the French clergy elected him as their president.

Alberoni wished to avoid war until Spain was in a position to fight, and had ships, men, and money. But an unforeseen incident upset his plans. Don Joseph Molines, the Spanish ambassador at Rome, had been appointed Inquisitor-General, and was returning home to assume his new duties; being old and infirm he preferred travelling by land, and was passing through the Milanais furnished with a safe-conduct given to him by the Pope, which the ambassador of the emperor said would be respected. In spite of this promise the Inquisitor-General was arrested by the Austrians as a rebel to *Charles III., King of Spain!* This insult exasperated Philip V., who, in spite of all the remonstrances of Alberoni, determined to avenge his honour at once. An army of 9000 men was landed in Sardinia, and that island was conquered in less than three months. As soon as the regent was informed of this expedition he despatched Dubois to London to confer with Lord Stanhope, and to try and hinder the emperor and the King of Spain from setting all Europe in a blaze. There was great difficulty in dealing with Philip, who had inherited all the pride of his grandfather, Louis XIV., who hated the emperor for refusing to acknowledge his title as King of Spain, and who hated the regent on account of his want of principle and his immorality, and because he had supplanted him in the government of France. In his rage Philip wished to attack

both the emperor and the regent, and he was backed up by his people. Suddenly, however, he was taken so ill that his life was despaired of; the patriotic movement at once abated, and the Spaniards addressed themselves to St. Aignan, the French ambassador at Madrid, asking him to implore the regent to deliver them from the tyranny of the foreigners! —that of the queen and Alberoni.

On the 18th July, 1718, a convention was signed in Paris between England, Germany, Holland, and France, by which it was agreed that the emperor should renounce for him and his successors all pretensions upon Spain and the Indies; that Philip V. should renounce all pretensions to the old Spanish provinces in Italy, and should evacuate Sardinia, which had just been conquered. There were a number of other provisions in this compact, which was converted into a treaty, and was signed in London on the 2nd August. Spain was the great sufferer, and France, after all the blood and treasure spent with the object of making her a natural ally, turned against her. It is true that the regent had some little difficulty in getting his council to undo the work of Louis XIV. The Duc du Maine and De Villeroi protested, and Marshal Uxelles declared that sooner than sign the treaty he would cut off his hand. In the end, however, the marshal preferred retaining his post at the head of Foreign Affairs to imitating Mutius Scævola.

The plenipotentiary of the emperor had signed the treaty in London at the same time as the repre-

sentatives of France and of England ; but Turkey having been obliged to sue for peace, and the emperor finding his hands free, suddenly declined to renounce his right to the throne of Spain. Fortunately Dubois, who considered the treaty as his work, was equal to the emergency. He threatened to commit suicide, and to carry with him to the grave the peace of Europe. In presence of the possibility of such a catastrophe the emperor yielded. But if the emperor yielded this was not the case with Spain. Stanhope was sent to Madrid to try and induce her to submit ; he is said, under certain conditions, to have even promised the restitution of Gibraltar. The Court of Madrid would listen to nothing. It had just despatched 300 transports, escorted by 22 ships of war, and 30,000 soldiers to Palermo. While the negotiators were talking about taking Sicily from one prince and giving him Sardinia in exchange for it, Spain conquered Sardinia, and sent the forces above enumerated to attack Sicily. Since the Treaty of Utrecht, Sicily belonged to the House of Savoy, with which the King of Spain (now recovered from his illness) was at peace. The conquest of that island was to be an indirect blow aimed at Austria. It was to be taken from Victor Amadeus, who was to be indemnified for its loss by receiving the Milanais, which belonged to the emperor. Unfortunately for Alberoni and the Spaniards, an untoward event spoiled this little game. While Admiral Gastaneta was busy carrying out the orders of his government with celerity and success,

and also to the delight of the Sicilians, an English fleet of twenty vessels commanded by Admiral Byng hove in sight, and soon commenced landing 3000 Austrian troops to aid in the defence of Messina, which was being besieged by the Spaniards. The case was all the more complicated as Spain and England were at peace. Gastaneta asked Byng for explanations, which were soon forthcoming. The Spanish admiral was informed by the British admiral that he ought not to see an act of hostility in a service rendered to an ally.

On passing Cape St. Vincent Admiral Byng had sent a messenger to Stanhope asking him to acquaint his Most Catholic Majesty with the arrival of his fleet in the Mediterranean, and to say that his orders were to compose the differences subsisting between the King of Spain and the emperor, and to defend the territory of the emperor against all attack. When Cardinal Alberoni was made acquainted with this message he flew into a violent fit of anger, saying that the Spaniards were not to be intimidated, that he was confident in the bravery of his fleet, and that the British admiral might attack it if he thought proper. In reply to this rhodomontade Stanhope presented the cardinal with a list of the vessels composing the British fleet; the cardinal angrily snatched the list away, tore it in pieces, and trampled it under-foot. He afterwards, however, cooled down, and promised to communicate the letter to the king, and to acquaint him with his Majesty's resolution. Either

through contempt, says Coxe, or to gain time for the Spanish fleet to take refuge at Malta, he delayed the performance of his promise for nine days. Stanhope then received the following letter—

“His Catholic Majesty has done me the honour to tell me that the Chevalier Byng may execute the orders which he has received from the king his master.

“Alberoni.

“*Escurial*, 15th July.’

The Spanish admiral, although he had two more ships than Admiral Byng, knew well that his fleet was in many respects inferior to that of England, and therefore stretched away to the south in the hope of getting under the protection of the shore batteries at Messina. The Spaniards, however, were brought to action, and the whole of their fleet, with the exception of four ships and six frigates, which managed to reach Malta, were taken or destroyed.

After this action Admiral Byng wrote a letter of excuse to the Marquis de Lede, declaring that the Spaniards had begun the battle, and “that this accident ought not to be considered as a rupture between the two countries.” And, in fact, neither France nor England desired hostilities. England trembled for her commerce, and the regent trembled lest public opinion should be opposed to waging war against the grandson of Louis XIV. in favour of Austria. A pretext was deemed necessary, and it was soon furnished by the discovery of the great Cellamare-Alberoni conspiracy, which had for its

object to secure the person of the regent, to claim the Regency for Philip V., to summon the States-General, to drive George I. from the throne of England and to re-establish the Stuarts, &c. Four days later the Spanish ambassador was arrested, together with the Duc de Maine and his wife, and a number of other supposed conspirators. This affair created great excitement, and entirely changed the tone of public opinion. The Spanish Government was accused of wishing to excite civil war in France. Dubois seized his opportunity, the Council of Regency was summoned, and on the 10th January, 1719, unanimously voted in favour of hostilities.

On his side Philip V. published a declaration of war, and invited the French troops to see in him the grandson of Louis XIV., the protector of the young king, and regent by right of birth. He left Madrid on the 26th April to place himself at the head of his army, only 15,000 strong. He was persuaded, however, that the French would rally round his standard directly he crossed the frontier, and it was not without some difficulty that Alberoni had prevented him from entering France with a simple escort. He was all the more convinced of this when he learned that Brittany was in a state of armed revolt, and that Marshal Villars had not only refused to command an army against a prince of the House of Bourbon, but had appealed to the regent and to his council deprecating war, and recommending a reconciliation between two crowns so nearly connected by blood and interest.

If Villars refused to command the French army on this occasion the Duke of Berwick did not evince the same scruples—the Duke of Berwick who in 1709 had re-established Philip on the throne by winning the battle of Almanza. And at this very moment the King of Spain was intrusting the Duke of Ormond with a force of 6000 men, which had been assembled at Madrid, and which was to make a descent in England in favour of the Pretender. But Berwick, who had been an exile for thirty years, was a soldier of fortune, and was possessed of none of the finer feelings.

Berwick soon crossed the Bidassoa with 40,000 men, and to this force the Spaniards could offer but a feeble resistance. If the French army marched with repugnance, Berwick maintained discipline. Fontarabia capitulated. Everything went wrong with the Spaniards, and Philip in despair returned to Madrid, no doubt to the great relief of Berwick, who had received strict orders to avoid taking him prisoner. Should the King of Spain get into difficulties the French commander was to leave him a loophole whereby to escape. In August St. Sebastien fell. A tempest dispersed the ships sent against England, and the English ravaged the coast of Galicia. Such the results were of the campaign of 1719.

In 1720, when operations were about to recommence, Alberoni tried to open up negotiations with England and Austria to the exclusion of France ; but, alas for the cardinal, the cabinets of France and of England

had agreed that the first condition of peace was to be the downfall of the wily prelate, who was accused of having raised the storm. As peace had now to be made, Alberoni on the 5th December was ordered to leave Madrid within a week and Spain within three weeks. He was deserted by the King and the Queen of Spain, while the Spanish people rejoiced to see a foreigner turned out of the country. Alberoni fled first to Genoa, and then hid himself in the Swiss Alps to avoid the wrath of Clement XI., who had asked the Genoese, but in vain, to accord his extradition.

After the fall of Alberoni, who was made a scape-goat of, Spain was forced to submit to the demands of the quadruple alliance, and to sign the treaty of London. By this treaty the emperor was put in possession of Sicily, the King of Sicily became King of Sardinia, and the children of the Queen of Spain obtained the reversion of Parma and Tuscany. Austria reigned supreme in Italy, and Britannia ruled the waves.

Several other arrangements were made at this time. Peace was concluded between Russia and Sweden, and the Czar assumed the title of emperor in the hope of establishing the empire of the East in Constantinople. In order to gain the support of France, the Czar offered the hand of his second daughter to the Duc de Chartres, the son of the regent, promising to see him made King of Poland on the death of Augustus. But as the vigour of

Augustus was proverbial,¹ as he was only fifty years of age, and as the matrimonial alliance would have been distasteful to England, it was allowed to fall to the ground by Dubois.

At the close of the year 1720 Barbier thus chronicled the marriage of the regent's fourth daughter—

“Sunday, 11th December, 1720.—The betrothal of Mademoiselle de Valois with the Prince of Modena took place in the king's study at six p.m., the Duc de Chartres standing proxy for the Prince of Modena. . .”

The next day the marriage ceremony was performed at the chapel of the Tuileries. “The king conducted the princess to her carriage, and said, ‘To Modena.’ This is a custom always observed, and when the sister of the Duke of Orleans married the King of Spain at Fontainebleau, the king, who escorted her to her carriage, said to the coachman, ‘To Madrid.’ . . .”

In 1721 we find the crafty Dubois trying to repair the mischief he had done in setting France and Spain by the ears. He owed his fortune to the differences which had arisen between the Bourbons of France and those of Spain, and he now wished to consolidate it by reuniting them in the interest of the House of Orleans. He caused to be insinuated to Philip V. the idea of marrying his daughter to Louis XV., and

¹ Carlyle invariably speaks of Augustus as “the physically strong” and “the paternal man of sin.”

his two sons, the Prince of Asturia and Don Carlos, the eventual heir to Parma and Tuscany, to two of the regent's daughters, Mademoiselle de Montpensier and Mademoiselle de Beaujolais. Philip V. accepted without hesitation. He was enchanted at the idea of having the King of France for his son-in-law. As for the two daughters of the regent, he is said to have accepted them in consequence of the incurable suspicion with which he viewed the conduct of their father. He could not banish from his mind the terrible accusations brought against the regent of having poisoned nearly all the royal family in France. He was prepared to look upon the two daughters of the regent as hostages for the Infanta. The princes and princesses were all too young to marry at once. Louis XV. was but twelve years of age; the Infanta was nine years his junior; the Prince of Asturia was fourteen, and Mademoiselle de Montpensier was only twelve years old; Don Carlos and Mademoiselle de Beaujolais younger still. It would be many years before a dauphin could be born, and until Louis XV. had a son the regent stood next heir to the throne. The Infanta was to go to France at once to be educated at the Court of Versailles, while the French princesses were to go to Spain to receive their education there.

The Council showed itself favourable to these matches, which were once more to reconcile not only France and Spain, but the regent and Philip V.; but at the same time it contemplated with alarm the

length of time which must elapse before a successor to the crown could be born. The old Court party, well known for its attachment to Spain, exhibited great repugnance for these marriages.

In spite of all opposition, however, it was shortly afterwards arranged that St. Simon should go to Madrid to make the official demand for the hand of the Infanta. Just before he set out we are told how the king awoke one morning with headache, sore throat, and a fever, which continued to increase all day. He passed a very bad night, and was much worse the next morning. St. Simon having approached his bed-side to see his Majesty, the Duchesse de la Ferté said in a half-whisper, "He is poisoned—he is poisoned." To this St. Simon replied, "Hold your tongue, Madame ; it is horrible." He was afraid that the king would hear her. The French doctors are said to have been quite disconcerted by the acute character of the illness of the king, "who owed his life to the boldness of Helvetius the younger, who bled him in the foot." Louis XV. soon recovered, went to Notre Dame to return thanks to the Almighty, showed himself to his faithful subjects at the windows of the Carrousel, and St. Simon started for Madrid.

It seems, however, that some difficulty was experienced in persuading the king to consent to wed the little Infanta. He was exceedingly shy and taciturn. When the regent spoke to him about his marriage he burst into tears and refused to answer. The Duc

de Bourbon, the Bishop of Fréjus (Fleury), and Villeroi all pressed him in turn, the latter several times repeating—"Come, my master, you must do the thing with good grace." It was with the greatest trouble that they managed to get a simple "yes" from him, and his Majesty offered a similar amount of resistance when asked to communicate his intended marriage to the Council of Regency.

In Barbier we find the following announcement—

"October, 1721.—The marriage of the king with the young Infanta of Spain is decided upon. She is only three years and a half old. The Duc de St. Simon is to leave on the 10th to demand the princess and to bring her back. He is to have a numerous suite. This will cost money."

Dubois hated St. Simon, and insisted upon the "numerous suite" in the hope of getting his adversary into pecuniary difficulties. Barbier continues—

"In consideration of this marriage the Queen of Spain has persuaded her husband, who is a fool and meddles with nothing, to make another. Mademoiselle de Montpensier, daughter of the regent, is to marry the eldest son of the King of Spain. It is said that the regent gave 3,000,000 francs to the queen to consent to this marriage, which is hardly suitable after all that has passed between the king and the regent. Then can the Spaniards, who are proud, like to have the daughter of the regent for their queen? They will always have something to

say about her origin.¹ However, the dresses are being made. The Prince of Asturia is fifteen years old, well made, but ugly.”²

On the 16th October—“There was great rejoicing in Paris. The king went to the Palais Royal and signed the marriage contract of the Princess of Asturia. He then went to the opera for the first time in his life. . .” In the evening he opened a ball at the Palais Royal with the Princess of Asturia.

“On the 18th the princess left Paris in state, the king telling the coachman to drive to Madrid. The regent accompanied the princess as far as Bourg-la-Reine. Astonishing preparations have been made for this journey, and it is said that about 4000 persons have been put in motion.”

However, St. Simon tells us that Mademoiselle de Montpensier was not allowed to take a single French person with her, neither lady nor maid; not that this seclusion tamed the imperious and unsociable character of this young person, who was corrupt from her infancy, like all the daughters of the Duke of Orleans.

¹ Her mother was Mademoiselle de Blois, the daughter of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan.

² “Up to that time,” says Lemontey, “the Prince of Asturia had been abandoned to valets, and had indulged in the most violent exercises in the forests. This heir to the Spanish throne had received the education of a faun. The prospects of marriage troubled his senses to such an extent that it was found necessary to remove the portrait of Mademoiselle de Montpensier from his room. Having heard a great deal of her perfections he fancied that she must be a great huntress, and he had a couple of guns secretly made for her.”

In Madrid it appears that the little Infanta was an object of idolatry, and that her parents with "tender pride" caused her to be treated as Queen of France. When the moment arrived for the Infanta to take her departure the King and the Queen of Spain wished to accompany her to the peristyle of the palace, but Philip and his wife had presumed too much on their strength; they both fainted, and the Infanta had to be taken from their arms.

The exchange of the two princesses—that of the Infanta and Mademoiselle de Montpensier—took place on the 9th January, 1722, on the Isle of Pheasants in the middle of the Bidassoa, and does not appear to have given rise to any incidents worth recording. Under date of 15th February, 1722, Barbier says, "As it is always necessary to amuse the people of Paris a little to console them for not having money, *astonishing magnificences* are being prepared for the arrival of the Infanta of Spain, who will be here in a few days. There are to be eight triumphal arches, and it is even supposed that the streets will be carpeted, which is not ordinary. Is it not *impertinent* to make such preparations for a child of three years and ten months, as also to arrange a marriage for the king before he is of an age to consent?"

The *Queen*, says Barbier, arrived at Berny, three leagues from Paris, on the 1st March. "The regent went to see her. They say that she is rather pretty than ugly, that she is small for her age, but has an infinite amount of wit (!) and vivacity. The Infanta

has brought with her a Spanish woman who was her *remueuse*,¹ and without whom she refuses to walk.

“2nd March.—The king went out to meet the Infanta as far as Montrouge, where the first interview took place. The queen went on her knees to salute the king, who raised her up and knelt in his turn. It is said that the king blushed, and said nothing but, ‘Madam, I am charmed that you have arrived in good health.’”

Barbier gives a long description of the entry, the king opening the march at the head of his household troops. “The queen, we see, sat on the knees of the Duchesse de Ventadour, accompanied by *Madame* (the mother of the regent) and the princesses of the blood, not forgetting her doll.” There was a splendid display of high dignitaries, of troops in showy uniforms, and servants in splendid liveries, &c. The *cortége* took an hour and a half to pass by. It was altogether a gorgeous spectacle, but Barbier could not but remark certain signs of misery; he was much struck with the number of houses to let in the streets through which the *cortége* passed. “The day after the entry,” he adds, “the king gave the Infanta a doll which is said to have cost 20,000 livres. . . . There were more illuminations in the evening than I should have believed. The people of Paris are very

¹ The duty of the *remueuse* was to turn a royal infant over in its cradle at stated intervals, no matter whether the child was awake or asleep.

foolish. . ." The Parliament presented the following address—

"Madame,—The letter of the king announced your arrival ; his example and his order determine us to offer beforehand the respects destined for you. You are the seal of peace between two great kingdoms ; may you always preserve that august character ! May the innocence of your age draw down upon the State the blessing of heaven."

This address was found very strange, and by no means pleased the regent. But the Parliament considered that, the king not being of age, it should have been consulted concerning the marriage, and it declined to acknowledge the Infanta as queen, but only as destined to become queen, and in this it exhibited its wisdom.

Great festivities followed, and on the 11th March "there was a grand ball at the Hôtel de Ville, at which the king, the Infanta, and all the Court were present. The king supped in private, opened the ball, and retired before ten o'clock. The aldermen forgot to have the doors guarded by the archers. Every one was a little tipsy, as always happens at the Hôtel de Ville, and there was a tumult after the departure of the king. The pages of the king and of the princes and other young men pushed the women about, pulled off their head-dresses, threw their wigs into the lustres, and made a row.

"Thursday, 12th March.—There was a grand *Te Deum* sung at Notre Dame ; the king was present

with all the princes. I saw the king enter the chapel to say his prayers, and as he came out I found that he was looking unwell and pale. This may perhaps be caused by grief, for it is said that he does not like his little Infanta, and that all these *fêtes* annoy him. . . . In the evening there was a grand ball at the Palais Royal, at which the king, the Infanta, and all the Court were present."

If some of the festivities in which Paris indulged in honour of the Infanta were rough and even immoral, those witnessed at Madrid in honour of Mademoiselle de Montpensier were of a much more deplorable character. In accordance with custom, the princess for her nuptial *fête* was offered the horrible sight of an *auto-da-fé*. In 1680 her aunt, who married Charles II., witnessed a similar spectacle, at which one hundred and eighteen martyrs suffered. Before that time the queens Elizabeth de Valois and Elizabeth de Bourbon had been treated to like revolting and cruel exhibitions. It appears that Philip V. showed a repugnance for these atrocities at first, but that he became used to them, and that during his reign, in the Peninsula alone, 14,066 victims were handed over to the tender mercies of the Inquisition, and that 2346 persons were burned to death.

With regard to the proposed marriage of Mademoiselle de Beaujolais with Don Carlos, we see that as she was only eight years of age when the contract was signed, she was sent to Madrid to be educated there. She left Paris in December, and was duly

handed over on the frontier by the Duc de Duras to the Spanish authorities. She was met by the King and Queen of Spain at a day's journey from Madrid, and was presented to Don Carlos. After remaining for some time in Spain she was sent back to France, where she expired in the flower of her youth. There seems to have been a sincere and mutual attachment between Don Carlos and Mademoiselle de Beaujolais, and, in fact, the regent's daughter is said to have died of a broken heart.

On the 22nd October, 1722, Louis XV. was crowned at Rheims, and it seems that, as people were becoming more and more sceptical, there was some hesitation as to whether his Majesty should touch for the king's evil, but Cardinal Dubois insisted that this ancient custom should not be departed from. The political education of the young monarch was now commenced, and the Council of Regency having been dissolved, a ministry was formed, Dubois acting as premier.

Early in 1723 the king's majority was proclaimed, and the day afterwards he went to Paris with great pomp and held a "bed of justice." Complaints still continued to be made of his Majesty's taciturnity, and it is reported that when the regent handed him over all his powers he said never a word. We see that the clergy at their annual assembly degraded itself to the extent of electing Dubois for their president. A man whose immorality and impiety were notorious, and whose obscene language was the

talk of Paris, from an abbé rose to be archbishop, then cardinal, then president of the French clergy, thus, as Henri Martin observes, crowning a life which had been a long profanation of all that men hold sacred. One of the first acts of Dubois as premier was to appoint a man called Breteuil Minister of War. Breteuil is said to have formerly rendered Dubois a great personal service by destroying all traces of a marriage which the cardinal had contracted in his youth with a person still alive and in a very obscure position. However, Dubois himself was now about to disappear from the scene. He had been suffering from a disease of the bladder since 1716, "which had forced him to live chaste and sober." In the month of August this unworthy prelate, wishing to imitate Richelieu, reviewed the household troops; his charger shied, the shock produced an aggravation of his disorder, and the doctors insisted on the absolute necessity of an operation. After indulging in much violent language, and swearing "according to his custom," the cardinal submitted; but gangrene set in, and there was no hope for him. He is said to have confessed; but he declined to receive the supreme unction from the hands of a simple *curé*. Cardinal Bissi was sent for, but before he had time to arrive Dubois was dead and gone. Barbier says that the operation succeeded perfectly, but that an hour afterwards there came on a thunder-storm with flashes of lightning. This put an end to the cardinal. Some say that the

Duke of Orleans lamented him, others that he joked over his approaching death, saying when he heard the thunder-storm—“*J’espère que ce temps-là fera partir mon drôle.*” We are told that the friends of the deceased had enough modesty left not to pronounce any funeral oration over his tomb; that there was nothing to be got by flattering the dead. But men of capital did flatter him after their fashion; the funds went down, speculators thinking it possible that Dubois might be succeeded by some one even worse than himself. As a matter of fact he was succeeded by his pupil, the Duke of Orleans, as Prime Minister, but the duke was ill; his brilliant intelligence and his vigorous constitution were prematurely exhausted by the perpetual orgy in which his life had been passed. He had always been of an indolent disposition, now he was worn out in body and mind, and thoroughly *blasé*. Had he possessed all the good intentions in the world, he was no longer in a position to rule the State. He had been informed by his doctors that if he persisted in his dissolute habits his career would soon be cut short. He cared little for life, and he had neither the courage nor the energy to renounce his wicked ways, which he was told would bring on either water on the chest or apoplexy. He chose the least painful manner of leaving this world, and neglected nothing to bring about sudden death. He had not long to wait.

On the 2nd December, 1723, the Duke of Orleans was alone in his cabinet with the Duchesse de Falari,

a young and lovely woman who was married to a financier of the name of Entraigues, to whom Clement XI. had given the title of duke. Suddenly his head fell on the lap of this woman. She called for aid and screamed with fright; there was no one in the ante-room; she had to go in quest of help. A number of persons came, but there was no doctor; a *laquais* opened a vein, but no blood came; the Duke of Orleans was already dead—dead at the age of forty-nine years and a few months. La Vrillière was one of the first to hear the news, and he informed the Bishop of Fréjus and M. le Duc (the Duc de Bourbon) of what had happened, and the bishop and the duke told the king. Louis XV. was much grieved, for he had always been treated by the regent with a mixture of respect and affection which in fact he never forgot.

The Duke of Orleans was succeeded as Prime Minister by the Duc de Bourbon, a hideous little man, who had lost an eye out shooting, who was as immoral as his predecessor, without being gifted with his talent or address, and who was completely under the influence of his mistress, the Marquise de Prie, a very fascinating, intriguing, and clever young woman.

Sismondi remarks that while the Duke of Orleans brought real talent to the government of the country, the Duc de Bourbon brought merely vulgarity and vice. The first had something of the handsome face of his uncle (Louis XIV.), of the dignity and the

elegance of his manners. In the field he had distinguished himself by his bravery, his science, and his generalship; in council he was remarkable for the lucidity and the rapidity of his conceptions, for the elegance and at times the eloquence of his language; in the midst of savants and men of letters he took a distinguished place, owing to the extent of his knowledge and the purity of his taste; but he had no sentiment of duty and no energy; he believed neither in virtue nor probity; in his early youth he abandoned himself to libertinism in consequence of having been obliged to marry against his will.

It was thought that Philip V., on sending the Infanta to France to marry Louis XV., and on receiving Mademoiselle de Montpensier, who was to marry the Prince of Asturias, and Mademoiselle de Beaujolais, who was to marry Don Carlos, had made up his quarrel with the Duke of Orleans. This was not the case. Philip V. hated the Orleanist branch, and when he heard of the death of the ex-regent, he told Marshal Tessé, who was then French ambassador at Madrid, that had he dared he would have ordered a salute to have been fired as a sign of rejoicing.¹ The marshal explained that this joy arose from an excessive dread of poison which almost drove his Catholic Majesty mad.

One person greatly affected by the sudden death of

¹ Secret letter of Marshal Tessé to the Duc de Bourbon, 28th February, 1724.

the Duke of Orleans was his son, who now succeeded to his title. The new Duke of Orleans became religious, and remained so to the end of his life, comforting the sick and dying, and thus atoning for the irregularities of his father. This, however, did not prevent him from being viewed with suspicion and jealousy by Philip V. in Spain, and by the Duc de Bourbon and the Condés in France, who dreaded his advent to the throne.

The first idea of the Duc de Bourbon on assuming power appears to have been to renew the intrigues of Alberoni and the Duchesse du Maine against the Orleanists, and to come to an understanding with Philip V., that in the event of the death of Louis XV. his renunciations to the throne of France should be set aside. At the same time, he made up his mind to break off the Spanish marriage, and to send the Infanta back to Madrid. The excuse for this act was her age. It would be too long before she could give an heir to the throne. For the moment he disguised his intentions concerning the Infanta, and contented himself with consulting the Comte de Morville on the probable consequences of so serious a step, nearly rendered unnecessary by the following incident thus noticed by Barbier—

“January 1st, 1724.—The queen, for the Infanta is so called, has caught the measles. They wished to bleed her before the eruption broke out, but a great many ceremonies were necessary before that could be done. They first brought in a man in

high boots, as though he had arrived from Spain with orders from the king and the queen: this did not intimidate her. An officer of the body-guard with four men with shouldered muskets next came in. The officer told the queen that he came on the part of the king (Louis XV.), who had been informed of her illness, and who ordered that she should be bled. At last she consented."

The death of the Infanta would have been a great relief to the Duc de Bourbon, but she was destined to live, and be the source of much trouble.

On the 10th January, 1724, another incident took place in Spain which rather interfered with the plans of the Duc de Bourbon. Philip V., in imitation of Charles V., suddenly announced his intention of retiring from the world. In a message to the Council of Castile he declared his determination to "withdraw entirely from all affairs connected with the government of the country, and to abdicate in favour of his son Don Louis, in order to live privately with the queen at St. Ildefonso." He added that the queen of her own free-will had offered to accompany him. His intention was to devote himself to the service of God, to meditate upon another life, and to work out his salvation.

Religion may have had a little to do with this resolution on the part of Philip V., who was extremely superstitious, and who believed it almost impossible for any human being to escape the tor-

ments of hell.¹ According to his own account, after having reigned for twenty-three years, he began to conceive doubts as to the validity of his title to the throne of Spain, and the bequest of Charles II. which had placed him there! But the real reason for his abdication was that he and his wife were sick and tired of the country of their adoption. It had often been announced to Philip that Louis XV. could not live, and these reports kept him in a constant state of excitement. His love for France grew stronger and stronger, and he passionately desired to return to Versailles, and to ascend the throne of his ancestors. He considered that in abdicating the throne of Spain he annulled the renunciation clauses of the treaty of Utrecht, and recovered all his rights to the French throne. Although only thirty-nine years of age he was already decrepit, and he was convinced that if he could only return to his native land he would find there health and happiness. The fact that he retained for himself a yearly allowance of £120,000 seems to prove that he wished to prepare rather for the kingdom of France than the kingdom of heaven. So large an income was hardly necessary for salvation, but it might be useful in opening up the way to the French throne.

¹ Numerous conjectures have been formed relative to the causes of this extraordinary event, but doubtless the principal motives were derived from that singular mixture of superstition and self-interest, of indolence and ambition, which composed the character of Philip.—Coxe, t. ii. p. 288.

After the accomplishment of a few formalities, and after he had pronounced a solemn vow never to resume the throne, the abdication of Philip V. was accepted and Don Louis was proclaimed in his stead—Don Louis, who was popular because he had been born in Spain, because he was deeply imbued with Spanish prejudices, and because he hated the French and the Italians, and, in fact, all nations but his own.

No sooner had Philip V. divested himself of his crown than he announced his desire to go to France for the benefit of his health, but really with the view of being on the spot in the event of the death of Louis XV., who he was assured was in a most precarious condition. In fact, in the course of six years the young king's life had been despaired of three times.

Incessant communications appear to have been kept up at this period between Philip V. and the Duc de Bourbon, and relays of couriers were stationed all along the road between Madrid and Paris, so that no time should be lost should the French king die. Everything was prepared for the event, and the queen's money and jewels were packed up in readiness for passing the frontier.

However, when the English Government, "tremblingly alive to every incident affecting the renunciation of the two crowns," heard what was going on, it determined to interfere. It therefore addressed an earnest remonstrance to the French cabinet, and

its apprehensions were speedily allayed by the cautious Fleury, who solemnly promised to maintain existing arrangements, and to procure from Louis XV. a declaration that he would not permit the contemplated journey of Philip.

Matters had been carried so far by the Duc de Bourbon that negotiations had been opened up with the Court of Rome in order to get Alberoni sent back to Spain, "it being odious," as Cardinal de Polignac said, "to see England making and unmaking peace to suit her caprices and her interest." It was considered that Alberoni alone was capable of carrying out the schemes of the French minister. But age, experience, and misfortune had worked their effect upon him, and he was in no way inclined to return to the scenes of his former brilliant conceptions and disgrace. He had done what he could to make Spain the nation she once had been when she made all Europe tremble, and he had been turned out of the country with ignominy, and had narrowly escaped with his life. When asked by the Duc de Bourbon to return to Madrid, he replied—"Spain is a dead body which I reanimated, but when I left she returned to the tomb."

The nominal reign of Louis I. did not last long. He had been but eight months on the throne when he was carried off by small-pox. As soon as Philip V. heard that the life of his son was in danger he determined to resume the crown, and he got the dying monarch to sign a will constituting him his

heir. The breath was hardly out of the body of poor Louis than Philip left his retreat, entered Madrid with all the emblems of royalty, and began to transact business with the Secretary of State. However, a strong party in the Court and the nation, as well as in the Council of Castile, were opposed to Philip's resumption of the throne, seeing the solemn way in which his renunciation had been made, and they were backed up not only by the Marquis de Mirabal, President of Castile, and the leading man in the ministry, but by Bermudez, the king's confessor. Bermudez represented to his Majesty that his resumption of the crown was a sin of the deepest dye, and, in fact, but for the vigorous opposition of his wife, Philip would have returned to St. Ildefonso. The queen assailed the confessor with the most violent abuse, compared him to Judas Iscariot, and declared, in presence of the king, that if on the point of death, she would rather die without receiving the last sacraments than accept them from such a wretch. His Majesty next appealed to Marshal Tessé, who possessed a great influence over the mind of the king. The marshal delivered the opinion that oaths and renunciations were only valid when they were not opposed to the welfare of the country; he declared that the French Government would no longer treat with Philip except as King of Spain, and he ended by saying that if his Majesty persisted in his fatal resolution he would withdraw from a Court where he could render no

further service. The Papal Nuncio was afterwards gained over. He represented to Philip that the Pope (Benedict III.) had formerly made a vow never to accept the Papacy; but yet he had felt himself bound in conscience to break a hasty engagement for the sake of the public good, and the Nuncio added that he was sure that his Holiness would approve of a similar act on the part of his Majesty. After some further discussion on the matter Philip reascended the throne of Spain, both he and his wife being tired of waiting for that of France, and also fearing the advent of another thoroughly Spanish ministry at Madrid.

On the 20th February, 1725, Louis XV. again fell suddenly ill, and for the space of forty-eight hours the doctors considered his life in danger. The Duc de Bourbon is represented to us as wandering about the palace like a maniac during the crisis, a prey to the most terrible excitement. Here was the son of the regent with one foot as it were on the throne, and his adherents already holding meetings at the house of his mother. What if the hated branch of Orleans should reign in France! The king recovered once more, but the duke had received such a fright that he made up his mind to insist upon Louis XV. marrying at once, and not waiting until the Infanta was nubile. In this resolution he was backed up by all his colleagues, and he at once wrote the following letter to Cardinal Polignac, the French ambassador at Rome.

“VERSAILLES, 25th February, 1725.

“Your Eminence will easily guess that the letter which I write is conceived in such a strain that it may be shown to the Pope; but you will take care, if you please, to impress upon his Holiness that while the king cannot refuse to show him this mark of confidence, H. M. desires that he will be good enough to keep the event to which it refers a profound secret. I may confide to your Eminence, that, although I do not precisely like to ask the Pope myself to write to the King of Spain, or to send orders to his Nuncio in Spain concerning this matter, I should, however, regard it as most important that his Holiness should feel his conscience sufficiently interested to do so. I even count that your Eminence will employ for the success of this view all that your intelligence, your talents, and the subject may suggest in order to convince the Pope. The resolution which the king has just taken will make so much noise in Rome that your Eminence will often find opportunities to speak of the subject. This must be done with the greatest simplicity, and with all the symptoms of sorrow that such an event should have been rendered necessary. . . . I enclose the letter which the king has written with his own hand to the Pope, and you must hand it to his Holiness during the audience which you will demand concerning this affair.”

REPLY IN CIPHER.

“ROME, 8th March, 1725.

“I had no sooner received the important orders contained in your despatch, than I sent to demand an audience with the Pope, which he was unable to accord until yesterday. I began by asking him to promise inviolable secrecy, which he promised. I shut all the doors of his study, and handed him the letter of the king. He opened it, and asked me to have it translated. Afterwards I thought that I could not do better than to read out, in Italian, the letter which you did me the honour to write to me in cipher, and which contains arguments so just and so solid that it would be impossible to add anything to them. The Pope from time to time wrung his hands, and raised his eyes to heaven. When I had finished, he said that he was much obliged for this display of confidence on the part of the king in so delicate a matter; that he perfectly understood how necessary it was that it should be kept secret until H. M. had informed the Court of Madrid of his intentions and his reasons,

and that he did not wish even Cardinal Paulucci, although a discreet man, to be informed of what was going on. He added that every one had been surprised and vexed that the external marks of an engagement should have been pushed so far¹—an engagement which could not be accomplished without exposing France and Europe to an infinite number of misfortunes, and which could not be broken off without the risk of bitter enmity ensuing between two crowns, the union of which was as necessary for the welfare of one as for that of the other; that the evil having been long since done, he saw that it had become necessary to choose between two extremities, that the second appeared to him less dangerous than the first, and that he would not permit himself to disapprove of the resolution of the king, although he foresaw the displeasure of their Most Catholic Majesties, for whom he had an extreme veneration. I replied that he had just heard with what unspeakable grief the king had come to the decision arrived at, and that never had such a decision been so forced on any one. That so many circumstances had necessitated it that he hoped that his Holiness would, by his paternal cares, soften the blow which this disagreeable news would inflict on the heart of the King of Spain, praying him, through charity, not to be offended; to weigh, on the contrary, the motives of this resolution, to examine without passion what H. M. owed to his subjects, to Christendom, to his blood and to himself, and not to listen to evil counsels in favour of showing a resentment contrary to divine law and his own interests. His Holiness promised to refer this affair to God, to write to the King of Spain with his own hand, and to send me a copy of the letter together with a reply to that of H. M.”

It was now fully determined to risk the wrath of Spain and of the Spanish party in France by sending the little queen back to her parents.

We read in Barbier the following paragraphs—

“March, 1725.—There is some talk of sending the Infanta back, and of the marriage of the king with another princess, Mademoiselle de Sens, a princess of England, or of Poland. But these reports are

¹ The sending of the Infanta to Paris.

dying away, and it is so strictly forbidden to circulate them that several persons have been arrested for mentioning the subject.

“April 5th, 1725.—The Infanta has left Paris. The king did not even bid her adieu. He was at Marly, and did not return to Versailles until after her departure, at which the Duchesse de Bourbon and the Marquise de Prie, who never leave the king, made him laugh. The Infanta was told that her father wished to see her, and that this was the reason of her voyage.

CHAPTER IV.

SPANISH AFFAIRS.

It appears that the Council was unanimous on the question of sending back the Infanta, and a letter of apology to the King of Spain was drawn up. It was pointed out to poor Philip that France was anxious for the birth of an heir to the crown, and the Council, aware that he was a strictly moral sovereign, urged that it was necessary to place the morality of Louis XV. under the protection of marriage, owing to the ardour of his temperament.

The Duc de Bourbon, considering that Marshal Tessé would not second his plans to the extent he desired, determined to recall him. He was personally devoted to the King and to the Queen of Spain, who had overwhelmed him with favours, and at the same time he was disliked by the Jesuits, upon whose intervention the Duc de Bourbon counted in order to appease Philip. The marshal was ordered home, and it was not until he reached Bayonne that he was made aware of the cause of his sudden removal, which so affected him that he sickened and died not long afterwards. The gallant old soldier was replaced at

Madrid by the Abbé de Livry. The Duc de Bourbon evidently expected that his new ambassador would have a rough time of it, for he wrote to him—"In charging you with this mission I am not treating you as a favourite." And in fact the abbé, who was overcome with terror when on reaching Madrid he learned his instructions, had much to suffer. When he was accorded an audience he went on his knees to present his letters to the king, his eyes being filled with tears. Philip, who appears to have been moved by the grief of the ambassador, took the despatch, and was looking for a pair of scissors with which to open it, when the queen made her appearance and objected. A long conversation followed. The royal couple were highly indignant, and the queen, tearing from her bracelet a miniature of Louis XV., trampled it underfoot exclaiming, "All the Bourbons are . . .¹—except your Majesty," added the queen, recollecting the House to which her husband belonged. The Abbé de Livry was obliged to withdraw without having been able to induce the king to read the explanations furnished by the French Government, and their Spanish Majesties determined, at no matter what cost, to revenge the insult offered to the Infanta. Philip declared that he would never be reconciled to France until the Duc de Bourbon repaired to Madrid to ask for pardon on his knees. The queen was not less violent; she demanded that every Frenchman without exception should be driven from Spain, and it was not until the king

¹ Coxe says devils, but the French historians leave a blank.

began to pack up his trunks and prepare for a voyage, on the ground that he was a Frenchman, that her Majesty was appeased. The English ambassador was sent for, and the queen said to Mr. Stanhope, "You see how we have been treated. Would you tolerate a similar indignity?" Giving way to her natural impetuosity, and roundly abusing the Duc de Bourbon for having aggravated the outrage by his duplicity, she added, "This one-eyed scoundrel has sent back my daughter because the king would not create the husband of his harlot a grandee of Spain."¹ Philip, who spoke with greater calm and more decorum, assured the British ambassador that he was determined to separate himself for ever from France. He thus hoped, he said, to draw closer the bonds of unity between Spain and England. He added, "I will place my whole friendship and confidence in your sovereign, and will order my plenipotentiaries at Cambray to reject the interposition of France, and submit the arrangement of my disputes with the emperor to the sole mediation of Great Britain."

For a few days the insult offered, not only to the King and the Queen of Spain, but to the nation at large, was concealed from the public, but when it became known the popular resentment knew no bounds, and extended far and wide through the kingdom. In Madrid a general massacre of the French was feared; the populace dragged the effigy

¹ Philip V. had in fact refused to confer this rank on the Marquis de Prie.

of Louis XV. through the streets, treating it with every mark of indignity, while shepherds along the slopes of the Pyrenees stole into the French valleys to hough French cattle.

Several measures were at once directed against France. The poor Abbé de Livry, who had been sent to Madrid to perform so unenviable a task, was ordered, together with all the French consuls, to leave the country without delay. Mademoiselle de Beaujolais, who had been affianced to Don Carlos, was sent back to France, the king and queen declining to see her before her departure. She seems to have been deeply attached to Don Carlos, and the rupture of her marriage is said to have broken her heart. Her sister, the widow of Louis I., was already on her way to France when the storm burst. She was ordered to await Mademoiselle de Beaujolais at Burgos. During her brief stay in Spain she appears to have behaved with such disregard for all decency, that had her husband not died he would have asked for a divorce. However, when Louis I. fell ill of small-pox she nursed him with such devotion that she recovered the favour of the Court and the people. Marshal Tessé even proposed a marriage between her and Don Ferdinand; but she had had enough of Spanish dulness and Spanish etiquette, and she obtained from Philip V. and Louis XV. permission to return to France.¹

At Paris the two Spanish ambassadors, Laullez and Monteleone, wished the Infanta to be handed

¹ She ended her days in the convent of the Carmelites.

over to them, but the Duc de Bourbon would merely allow them to accompany her on the road to the frontier. The Marquis de Santa Cruz went to meet the Infanta with a "caravan" of over 400 persons, and another exchange of princesses, somewhat similar to that which had been effected three years before, took place. The exchange of 1722 was, however, made in the interest of peace between France and Spain; the present exchange was the prelude of war. In 1722 the three princesses exchanged were to have husbands. The Infanta returned to Spain as she left that country. Mademoiselle de Montpensier married Louis I., and returned a widow, and Mademoiselle de Beaujolais returned unmarried to France to die of grief.

When the second exchange took place, we are told that the Infanta, ignorant of her fate, played with all the gaiety of her age. Mademoiselle de Beaujolais was inconsolable, while her sister exhibited a stupid apathy. It is added that the Marquis de St. Cruz did not push Spanish pride so far as to refuse the rich diamonds which Louis XV. had given to the Infanta, and that on arriving at Madrid he exhibited some black bread upon which he pretended that the Infanta had been nourished in France.

Six months after the Infanta had been sent back to Madrid, the 30th April, 1725, an alliance was concluded between those former rivals and deadly enemies, Charles VI. and Philip V. The emperor renounced his pretensions to the crown of Spain, and Philip

guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction,¹ and opened his ports to Austrian ships. Charles promised to aid Philip to recover Gibraltar and Minorca by force of arms, and a matrimonial alliance was agreed to—the Archduchess Maria Theresa was to marry Don Carlos, and the Archduchess Maria Anne, Don Philip; and if George I. refused to adhere to these designs, the Pretender was to be *re-established* on the throne of Great Britain.

This alliance, had it been carried out, would have once more destroyed the European equilibrium, and have re-established the empire of Charles V. It is considered doubtful if Charles VI. was sincere in his intention of keeping promises which met with the opposition of his wife, and with that of nearly all his Council, who were preparing to marry the two archduchesses to two sons of the Duke of Lorraine. However, the news of the signing of the treaty of Vienna created quite a panic, for Europe was threatened with a general war. The English minister was asked by the Marquis de Grimaldi to give up Gibraltar, and that “one-eyed scoundrel,” the Duc de Bourbon, was summoned to repair to Madrid in person, to implore pardon on his knees. The duke wished at all hazards to avoid a rupture; he addressed the Court of Spain in the most submissive tone; he thought of appeasing the wrath of Philip by sending his brother, the Comte de Charolais, to Madrid to apologize, a course which had been proposed by Stanhope; and as his colleagues

¹ We shall refer to that act and its consequences further on.

represented that the count was hardly a fit and proper person, being of a hot temper and "ferocious character," he offered to send a cardinal, appealed to the Pope, intrigued with Guerra, the confessor of the queen, and with Bermudez, the confessor of the King of Spain, who attempted to reconcile the two crowns. But nothing would allay the wrath of Philip, who redoubled his activity in raising up enemies against France. He married his son Ferdinand, Prince of Asturias, to the daughter of the King of Portugal. The hand of the little Infanta, repudiated by France, was bestowed on the Prince of Brazil, and to show that he was in no way humiliated, he permitted bull-fights, which he had prohibited at the opening of his reign, and which we are assured created more enthusiasm among the Spaniards than if their liberties had been restored to them.

George I. declined the overtures of Philip, who now turned his chief resentment against England, and the Queen of Spain said to Stanhope, "You must either relinquish Gibraltar or your trade to the Indies." Preparations for war were made everywhere. George I. repaired to Hanover in order to be able to watch the doings of the emperor; in addition to his English advisers he was accompanied by the French ambassador, the Comte de Broglie. On the 2nd September, 1725, there was signed at Hanover, as a reply to the treaty of Vienna, an alliance between England, France, and Prussia.

At this moment Ripperda, a converted Dutchman,

“had been chosen to guide the helm of state” in Spain, and he did all in his power to bring about a general conflagration. Fortunately neither Spain nor Austria were possessed of the sinews of war, and when the emperor applied to Philip for pecuniary assistance, he was informed that the Spanish exchequer was empty. Ripperda had persuaded the emperor that the finances of Spain were in the most flourishing condition, and his master that Austria was ready to take the field with an army of 150,000 men, with Prince Eugene at their head, and that Gibraltar would soon be captured. He spoke with contempt of the Duc de Bourbon, and of the divisions and weakness of the French Government. “Should the Hanover allies,” he exclaimed, “dare to oppose the designs of the emperor and Spain, that ‘big grenadier,’ the King of Prussia, shall be driven from his throne; George I. stripped of his territories in the empire in a single campaign, and his English throne filled by the rightful heir, James III. Never shall a reconciliation take place while I have any influence. . . .” He would teach those scoundrels, he said, to make treaties between them, and France was to be invaded by a deluge of Germans, Russians, and Poles, who would recommence the famous ravages of the Huns and the Vandals.

These were the kind of tales with which Ripperda regaled the ears of Philip and Elizabeth Farnese. The emperor, however, sent Konigseg as ambassador to Madrid, and the aspect of affairs was speedily

changed. It soon appeared that the emperor was in no hurry to conclude the marriages which had been stipulated, being deterred by the opposition of the German princes. It was also evident that Ripperda had greatly over-estimated the military resources of Austria, while the influence of the Hanover allies was triumphant in every quarter. In reply to Konigseg's frequent demands for money, Ripperda had to plead poverty, and to ask the Imperial ambassador to await the arrival of supplies from America. In fact, the scales began to fall from the eyes of both parties, and the intercourse between Konigseg and Ripperda became less cordial, and ended in covert hostility.

After trying to frighten Stanhope with schemes of invasion and on the subject of Gibraltar, Ripperda now began to lower his tone. Philip V. would not lessen his pretensions, he said, but he would wait a twelvemonth, or even a longer time, for the restitution of Gibraltar. He desired an amicable negotiation on this point, and was prepared to pledge his head that Spain would offer an equivalent which would be acceptable to the British nation. At the same time Ripperda made a desperate effort to detach France from the Hanover alliance, but he was everywhere unsuccessful. To show the cordiality which existed between the Courts of St. James and of Versailles, Mr. Stanhope, in the absence of the French ambassador, was charged with the business of both countries. It was a great blow both to Philip and his minister

when Stanhope presented the letter written on this occasion by the Comte de Morville; a greater blow still when they learned shortly afterwards that France and England, without actually declaring war, were menacing Spain by land and sea; that a French army had been set in motion, and that England had sent one squadron to the Baltic, a second to the coast of Spain, and a third to block the Spanish galleons in the ports of America. By the first the powers of the North were held in check; the second alarmed Spain for the safety of her shores; and the third, by cutting off supplies which were sorely needed, destroyed her public credit.

A variety of reasons at this moment produced the fall of the Duc de Bourbon in France and of Ripperda in Spain, the former being succeeded by his personal enemy, Cardinal Fleury. As for poor Ripperda, to escape from popular indignation, he was obliged to seek refuge in the house of the British ambassador, to whom he betrayed all the secrets of the Spanish Government. He appears to have entered the embassy in tears, and to have embraced the portrait of King George as if his Majesty had been his tutelary saint. When asked why he had not sought refuge in the house of the Papal Nuncio, which would have been natural on the part of a newly-converted Catholic, he replied that he had more faith in ships than in breviaries. In spite of this faith Ripperda was torn from the British embassy by a detachment of guards, who arrested him on the charge of having

committed a State crime. He is said to have forgotten all his papers, but to have carried away with him two bottles of wine. He was imprisoned in the castle of Segovia, but after a confinement of fifteen months he managed, though crippled with gout, to make his escape to England. He then returned to his native land, became once more a Protestant, but being of a restless disposition, he soon afterwards entered the service of Muley Abdallah, Emperor of Morocco, turned Mussulman, and after having done the State some service, died at Tetuan in 1737. The fate of the Duc de Bourbon was less painful, but even more abrupt than that of Ripperda, and we are told that his fall was hailed in Spain with scarcely less exultation than the conclusion of the alliance with the emperor.

Both Philip and Elizabeth appear to have been convinced that Cardinal Fleury, the new French minister, would signalize his accession to power by breaking off all alliance with heretics, and renewing the connection between the two branches of the House of Bourbon. His first act was to attempt, through the mediation of the Papal Nuncio, to settle family disputes. He declared that he himself had had no share in sending the Infanta back to Spain, but this was no satisfaction to Spanish pride. "An imperious reply from Philip" for a time put an end to all hope of reconciliation, the fact being that the cardinal minister had no idea of renouncing the heretical alliance with England. It was generally supposed that Philip and his wife, having no personal

animosity against Fleury, would have been willing to accept his offers of reconciliation, but that reconciliation was to be purchased only at the expense of England. Ripperda had fallen, not on account of his extravagant warlike policy, but owing to his arrogance and presumption, and because he was a foreigner. The Catalian minister, Don Jose Patinos, by whom he was succeeded, persisted therefore in the policy of his predecessor, and the consequence was that military preparations were continued on an alarming scale.

Matters now began to look very gloomy for France and England. Russia was induced to accede to the Vienna alliance, the King of Prussia was detached from the Hanover alliance, and the support of the Catholics of Germany was obtained by the promise of liberal subsidies.

A few words here on the subject of Cardinal Fleury, whose star was now in the ascendant. His father, who was a receiver of *décimes*, or tax collector, in the diocese of Lodève, placed him among the dependents of the Cardinal de Bouzi, whose protection he had obtained. The queen died, and the cardinal procured for the abbé the place of almoner to the king. There was a great noise about this, but people get used to everything. Tolerated at first, he was afterwards admitted into the best society at Court. Louis XIV. blamed his conduct, finding it too worldly and dissipated; and when the bishopric of Fréjus fell vacant, it was much against his inclination that he nominated

him to that See, on the earnest solicitation of the Archbishop of Paris. Putting his hand on the archbishop's shoulder, the king said, "You wish me to make the Abbé de Fleury bishop of Fréjus in spite of all that I have urged against the appointment; you insist that the diocese is at the end of the kingdom in an out-of-the-way place; I must yield in order not to be further importuned in this matter, but I yield with regret, and remember what I predict, that you will repent of what you have done." Strange that after this royal excommunication the Bishop of Fréjus should have been called upon to succeed Bossuet and Fénelon in the difficult task of educating a king, and that Louis XIV. himself, when dying, should have named him preceptor to Louis XV.

Cardinal Fleury exercised a great ascendancy over the mind of his pupil, owing probably to his quiet and rather effeminate manner. Fleury was the only person who could induce the young monarch to speak. When he succeeded the Duc de Bourbon he was seventy-three years of age, and Louis XV. was a little over sixteen. The advent of the cardinal to power was hailed with delight in France, being regarded as a return to morality, order, and decency, and his whole administration was one of singular purity. It is said that he was open to flattery, and was easily duped by the homage and false protestations of foreign sovereigns, but this was better than being open to bribery. St. Simon makes out that he allowed himself to be completely captivated by Lord

Walpole, the English ambassador in Paris, who exercised a great influence over the policy of France. One of the great features of his administration was that he governed as little as possible, allowing the country tranquilly to repair its disasters. Voltaire says that people were astonished to find in the first minister of the crown the most amiable and disinterested of courtiers.

While Spain and Austria were thus preparing for the fray, a report reached Philip that the health of Louis XV. was declining rapidly. The general opinion was that his Majesty could not long survive, and that he would soon follow the rest of his family to an early grave.

The illness of Louis XV. immediately re-awakened the darling hope of Philip to sit on the French throne. He at once despatched a confidential agent to France, one Abbé de Montgon, a Frenchman, who had exchanged the sword for the gown, who enjoyed the full confidence of Philip and Elizabeth, and who, brought up in the family of Condé, had formerly been employed by the Duc de Bourbon in his negotiations with the Court of Madrid. The secret instructions of the abbé were to consolidate the union of all parties in favour of Philip, and either to gain over Cardinal Fleury or to counterbalance his hostility by fomenting internal discord. When he was about to leave Madrid the queen said to him, "You are going to a country where I am little loved; you shall judge whether with reason or not. We were informed by

a special messenger from the Court of France, that as soon as my daughter had completed her seventh year her betrothal with the king should take place. Yet the very next courier brought us word that she was to be sent back. Is it wonderful that the king and myself should resent an insult which would provoke the meanest individual?" The abbé attempted to show that the insult could not be attributed to the French nation, which had hailed the arrival of the Infanta with joy, and had witnessed her departure with concern; but he was interrupted by the queen, and told to confine himself to his instructions instead of, as he desired, bearing a message of peace.

Philip appears to have drawn up his instructions for the abbé with his own hand. The monarch wrote—"If it please God that the king, my nephew, should die without male heirs, I, the nearest relative, or my descendants, ought and will succeed to the crown of my ancestors." The king told his envoy that he was to hold no official communication with Cardinal Fleury, though he might visit him in a private capacity and endeavour to learn his views. With the Comte de Morville, who was devoted to England, he was to hold no intercourse whatever. As to the emperor, he was of course to be thrown over should Philip succeed to the French crown. The instructions went on to say—"Give no umbrage to the ministers of the emperor, but by no means impart to them the slightest hint concerning the objects of your mission.

Act in everything as a private individual, avoiding the airs of a minister, and make no allusion to a reconciliation in the present state of affairs."

That "one-eyed scoundrel" the Duc de Bourbon, who had sent back the Infanta, who was to go to Madrid to implore pardon on bended knee, and who was the chief cause of all the troubles which followed, was to be gained over. The duke was still exiled from the Court, and nothing would induce the king to allow him to return to Versailles. His mother, when she asked Louis XV. to allow him to wish him joy on his recovery, was met with a decided "no." But should Louis XV. die, the position of the head of the House of Condé would undergo a considerable change, as then no one would stand between him and the French throne but the Duke of Orleans. The "instructions" went on therefore to say—"Attempt particularly to gain over the Duc de Bourbon, by assuring him that if he will engage to favour my just cause, I will forget the past, and that he may expect from me in return attention and friendship. This point will require your utmost secrecy, discretion, and address."

The abbé was further furnished with letters for the French Parliament, which were to be presented on the death of Louis XV., and these letters contained orders that Philip was to be proclaimed King of France. However, Louis XV. did not die, and little came of the mission of the Abbé de Montgon, except

that he effected a reconciliation between his master and the Duc de Bourbon.

In 1727 affairs took another change. Spain commenced hostilities with England, and attacked Gibraltar, which the Marquis de las Torres engaged to capture in six weeks, and before the French could interfere. But the Rock held out; Holland, Sweden, and Denmark adhered to the Hanover alliance; the death of the Czarina deprived Spain and Austria of a powerful ally in the north; the "big grenadier" began to waver, and the Catholic princes of Germany, disappointed at not receiving the promised subsidies, could no longer be depended upon; in addition to this, France, remaining faithful to England, assembled an army on the German frontier. The emperor was the first to yield. On the 31st May, 1727, the preliminaries of peace were signed between Charles VI. and the allies of Hanover, and Philip V. and his wife, no matter what their irritation, were constrained to bow to the necessities of the moment. Spain signed preliminaries on the 13th June, but on hearing of the death of George I., which occurred on the 22nd June, she refused to ratify them. Philip hoped that the Jacobites would rise in England, and that the friendly relations between the Courts of St. James and of Versailles would be disturbed. He was once more disappointed. Cardinal Fleury and Walpole continued to act together in the interest of peace. A few friendly letters were now exchanged between Louis

XV. and Philip V., tending to allay ill-feeling, and the former consented to remove the Comte de Morville from office, the count having approved of the Infanta being sent back to her parents, and the Queen of Spain, with her usual vehemence, insisting upon his punishment.

For the moment matters remained stationary in consequence of Philip having been seized with a fit of melancholy closely allied to madness. He went to bed and remained there for six months; he would neither be shaved, have his nails cut, nor change his linen. When his shirt rotted and fell off he would not accept another from any other hands but those of the queen. He sometimes remained silent for days, and then flew into a violent passion, beating and scratching his wife, the confessor, and the doctor, or biting his own arm and uttering the most fearful yells. The queen, as soon as possible, had Philip removed to the Pardo; she then summoned the Prince of Asturias to the Council, and obtained his signature to a royal decree appointing her regent. However, in March 1728 Philip recovered, and returned with regal pomp to Madrid. Out of gratitude for his recovery he made a nine days' pilgrimage to the chapel of our Lady of Atocha, and wore the dress of a Franciscan for twelve months.

In spite of many serious hitches and much ineffectual negotiation at Soissons and elsewhere, peace was patched up at Seville in 1729, and shortly after-

wards the Pragmatic Sanction became the chief element of discord. After all the squabbles raised over the Spanish succession and the sending back of the Infanta, fresh troubles were in store for Europe in connection with the Austrian succession, upon which French matrimonial alliances exercised a considerable influence.

CHAPTER V.

MARRIAGE OF LOUIS XV.

WHO was Louis XV. to marry? This was the important question now to be decided. In accordance with the demand of the Duc de Bourbon, the Foreign Minister furnished him with a list of eligible princesses. We find that the number amounted to ninety-nine, of whom twenty-five were Catholics. De Morville made a selection, and appended notes for the guidance of the Duc de Bourbon. Concerning the Princess Anne, daughter of the Czar, he wrote—"Her mother was a woman of low extraction, and she has been brought up in the midst of people who are still barbarous." The Infanta of Portugal was dismissed as belonging to a nation which was not faithful, and whose blood was dangerous. After many discussions upon the question, it was suggested that it would be a good stroke of policy to marry Louis XV. with a daughter of the Princess of Wales, as Philip V., through dread of Great Britain, would be afraid to display his wrath. The Comte de Broglie was sent to London ostensibly to present King George with a portrait of Louis XV., but in reality to propose a

matrimonial alliance. This alliance was naturally declined. But what George I. refused the Empress Catherine offered. She offered Louis XV. her second daughter, the Princess Elizabeth, who afterwards ascended the Imperial throne. The Russian princess was to embrace the Catholic religion, and Russia was to place her army at the disposal of France in the event of a European war. In addition to this, Catherine proposed to set up the Duc de Bourbon on the throne of Poland, on the death of Augustus, *the duke to marry the daughter of the dethroned monarch, Stanislas Leczinski*. The Marquise de Prie of course set her face against this arrangement. She had no idea of allowing her lover to take a wife and go to Poland. The Duc de Bourbon therefore declined the offers of the Empress Catherine with thanks.

La Revue Rétrospective makes mention of several reports addressed to the Duc de Bourbon concerning this marriage. One dated March pointed out that religion, the safety of the State, public tranquillity, private affairs, and the interest of Europe, and in fact of the whole world, rendered it desirable that the king should be married as soon as possible; also that the public would be scandalized were the king left too long without being in a position to have children. After urging other important reasons for an early marriage, the report asked—"What is the treaty by which the Infanta was brought here at the age of four years and a half, to marry, eight years later, our young king, who remains the last of the

direct line of his august house? What was the matter? Was it to terminate a war onerous for France to bear? No; we were at peace with Spain. Was it through love for that nation or for its king? No; we had just waged war with Spain, had weakened her, and had despoiled her of the kingdoms of Sicily and Sardinia in order to give them to the emperor. Was it to break up a formidable alliance which menaced the ruin of France? No. Was it to add another kingdom to ours, or even a province? No. . . . Who was the minister who concluded the treaty? The Cardinal Dubois. How can the engagement of such a monster of iniquity bind a good Frenchman and the prince who governs us?"

While admitting that Spain possessed the stuff for making a great nation, the writer argued that she would not sulk for any length of time if the match with the Infanta were broken off, as she had more need of France than France had of her.

A second report made to the Duc de Bourbon commenced thus—"You are more fortunate than you suppose in the present juncture. . . . You can deny having made any propositions to England, since they were not made in your name, and though the refusal was based on the constitution of the State, and owing to religion, it is better to be able to say that there was no refusal. . . ."

The claims of Mademoiselle de Vermandois¹ were

¹ Grand-daughter of Louis XIV. and Mademoiselle de la Vallière.

strongly urged. "Her body and mind," it was said, "stand revealed. Your Excellency can become as well acquainted with them as the anatomist and the confessor; from her infancy she has led a holy life. . . . It is well known all the artifices which are employed to plaster up marriageable daughters. It appears to me that they are all angels before their nuptials, as they are devils very shortly afterwards. . . . The welfare of the State demands that the Infanta should be sent back. Political reasons give the preference to England, but reasons of a false religion stand in the way."

The Duc de Bourbon himself presented a long report to the king, in which he explained that it would be less dangerous to quarrel with Spain than that his Majesty should remain for eight years without being able to give successors to the throne. He presented a list of one hundred marriageable princesses; from those, however, he had eliminated forty-four as too old, twenty-nine as too young, and ten whose alliance was not considered as suitable. Among these ten was Marie Leczinska. There remained seventeen princesses, which number, after due examination, the duke reduced to four, from which he considered his Majesty should select his wife—the two daughters of the Prince of Wales, Mademoiselle de Vermandois, and Mademoiselle de Sens.¹ The duke explained all the advantages which would be derived from an alliance with England, which would strengthen the bonds of

¹ Of the House of Condé.

friendship existing between the king, his master, and the King of Prussia, &c. The English princess, either Anne or Amelia Sophia, would of course have to embrace the Catholic religion. The duke also pointed out the objections to the English match. First, it would fill all Catholics with alarm, for they would doubt the sincerity of a youthful princess changing her religion for political motives. Second, this union would perhaps be an obstacle one day to the protection which it might be well to accord to the Chevalier de Saint Georges (the Pretender). Third, it might irritate the Court of Rome, of whose good offices France stood in need to persuade the King of Spain that the marriage of the king is indispensable. Fourth, in the event of the queen having any authority in the Government, this marriage would form a protection for Protestants and Jansenists, and would inevitably become the source of great misfortunes.

The duke had a good deal to say in favour of Mademoiselle de Vermandois, while Mademoiselle de Sens was dismissed with this curt notice—"Nineteen years. There is something to be said about her figure."

Strange to say, these propositions on the part of the Czarina led to the marriage of Louis XV. with the princess whom her Majesty had recommended to the Duc de Bourbon, and who had been eliminated from the list of eligible princesses by the duke himself. It seems to have struck the Marquise de Prie that Marie Leczinska would make a suitable wife for Louis

XV. Being of an extremely docile character, and owing her position to the favourite of the Prime Minister, and having no one to support her either in France or abroad, she would no doubt show her gratitude and be easy to manage. Stanislas Leczinski was at that moment in Alsace, living upon a small pension furnished by the French Government. The Duc de Bourbon approved of the match, and so did Fleury, who persuaded the king to give his consent, which he accorded "with all the indifference of a child."

Barbier tells a curious story with regard to the marriage now proposed. He says that—

After dread Pultowa's day,
When fortune left the royal Swede,

a kind of witch was presented to Stanislas, who told him that he would shortly lose his eldest daughter, but that his second daughter would console him for the loss of the first, as she would become a great queen. His Polish Majesty was much astonished, and on questioning the woman, was told that Marie Leczinska would become Queen of France, and that he himself would recover his throne in 1733; and both predictions were fulfilled.

Although his eldest daughter died according to prophecy, his Polish Majesty was hardly prepared for the piece of good fortune which now brightened his exile. He is said, when he received the French propositions, to have rushed into the room where his

wife and daughter were sitting, exclaiming, "Let us go down on our knees and thank God!" On his daughter asking him if he had recovered the throne of Poland, he replied, "Far better than that, you are Queen of France."

Barbier thus chronicled this unexpected event:—

"May 1725.—Nothing is positively known yet about the queen. The Princess Stanislas gains ground. The household of her Majesty is formed like to that temple which was raised at Rome with the inscription *Deo ignoto*—to the unknown God.

"27th May, 1725.—After dinner the king declared his marriage with the Princess Royal of Poland, who is the Princess Leczinska, daughter of King Stanislas. This marriage astonishes every one. It in no way suits the King of France, especially as the Leczinskis do not belong to one of the four great houses of Poland. They are simple gentlemen, and this is an unheard-of piece of good fortune for this princess."

The Duc de Bourbon received several letters touching the proposed marriage, which rendered him rather uneasy. In these it was positively asserted that the ill-health of Marie Leczinska was an obstacle to her marriage, and that she was subject to epileptic fits. The duke wrote to King Stanislas on the subject, and determined to send a doctor to examine the princess; he also despatched the following letter to Marshal Dubourg, who commanded the Alsace district.

“VERSAILLES, 6th May, 1725.

“The king having decided upon breaking off his engagement with the Infanta, you may imagine that he did so in order to marry promptly, and as the Princess Stanislas suits, you will not be surprised if I ask you for some information. I first of all beg that you will observe the greatest secrecy in this matter, and that you will write to me all you know, especially as concerns her health, which is the principal point, the king marrying only with the intention of having healthy children. As I know that you have a very clever doctor at Strasburg, it is probable that he has been several times consulted as to the health of the princess ; consequently he must know all about her constitution, if she is in good health, and if she has, or has had, any infirmities, and what kind. I beg that you will elucidate this matter with all that dexterity of which you are capable. . . .

“LOUIS HENRI DE BOURBON.”

Duphénix was the medical man selected by the Duc de Bourbon to inquire into the health of the princess. The duke had been assured that she had been under treatment for epilepsy at a convent at Treves. Duphénix was to repair to Treves, and to see the lady abbess and the nun who was said to have cured the princess, and from thence he was to go to Weissembourg, where King Stanislas resided. At Treves it was discovered that the Queen of Poland had taken a lady to the convent to be treated for epilepsy, “several years ago,” and that the lady in question was thirty years of age. She was not the daughter of the Queen of Poland, but a friend to whom her Majesty was deeply attached.

In due time the Duc de Bourbon received a medical certificate which was in every way satisfactory, and which disposed of all the calumnies circulated con-

cerning the future Queen of France. The celebrated Strasburg practitioner had attended her for two years, during which time she had suffered merely from two feverish attacks of no consequence, and a little lumbago caused by passing a long time in church in a constrained position.

With this certificate before him the Duc de Bourbon sat down to write to King Stanislas; he was "overwhelmed with joy and satisfaction;" he had acted as he had done "so as to be able to confound those persons who had advanced such lies." Having made matters pleasant on the subject of the medical examination, the duke went on to explain how matters then stood in this wise—"As it is desirable to treat the King of Spain with the greatest respect, to put him in the wrong, and prevent him from making any well-founded complaint, although he has refused to receive two letters from the king, his Majesty has determined to write to him again, and also to the queen, announcing his marriage with the princess your daughter. . . As we have no longer a minister at Madrid, the Papal Nuncio at Paris will forward the letters and have them handed to Grimaldi. . . ."

Several complimentary letters then passed between King Stanislas and the Duc de Bourbon, who was highly delighted with having brought a difficult and a delicate negotiation to a happy issue.

In the *Journal de Paris* Mathieu Marais says—

"27th May, 1725.—This morning the king, at his

petit lever, declared the name of the queen, which was announced to the Court by the Duc de Gesvres. It is the Princesse Marie, daughter of King Stanislas Lécinski. Here is a terrible name for a French queen. The Court was as sad as if it had been announced that the king had had a fit of apoplexy. . . French hearts are not made to love the Poles, who are the Gascons of the North, and very Republican. . . King Augustus, Elector of Saxony, will be angry with us for taking for queen the daughter of his competitor, and may get us into trouble with the emperor and the empire ; Spain will join in ; England, on account of Hanover, will side with the Elector, and the whole of Europe may be plunged into a terrible war. With the Infanta we had peace, and her marriage with the king might easily have been put off, the succession being assured by treaties. However, all this is in the hands of God."

The Duc d'Antin and the Marquis de Beauvau were despatched with great pomp on the 28th July, to make the official demand for the new queen, who by her gentleness and modesty soon removed all prejudices against her. The Duc d'Antin wrote—"I admit that she is ugly, but she pleases me beyond all I can express." The duke then added the following curious details—"The King and the Queen of Poland are overcome with grief because the Comte de Tarlo has written to them that they will not be able to sit at table with their daughter after the celebration of the marriage. I don't know where the

devil the Marquis de Dreux has picked up this cruel etiquette. It will be the poison of their life, and the triumph of all their enemies, who seek to run them down. Even should this be according to etiquette, the rule ought not to be insisted upon. Sweden would never pardon them.¹ The princess and her family greatly desire that she should be married on the day dedicated to the Virgin, to whom she is specially devoted." As regards the point of etiquette, it was decided that Marie could dine with her parents in private as usual; but if in public she was to have the place of honour, that is to say, between her father and mother, "the King of France not giving his hand to elective monarchs."

The marriage was celebrated at Strasbourg on the 2nd September, and who should have been selected to stand proxy for Louis XV. but the Duke of Orleans, who is said to have received a gift of 100,000 crowns for thus sacrificing his dignity, and taking part in an act which constituted a reversal of the policy of his father the regent.

Directly after the conclusion of the marriage ceremony at Strasbourg, her Majesty set out for Fontainebleau, where Louis XV. was waiting to receive her. Barbier furnishes us with the following description of her arrival:—

"September 4th, 1725.—The king, with all the princesses in his carriage, went to meet the queen,

¹ Stanislas was under great obligations to the Court of Sweden, and, in fact, owed the crown he lost to Charles XII.

who made him wait, as her carriage had got stuck in the mud, and it required more than thirty horses to get it out. The roads were fearful, and all the king's household were covered with mud. When the two carriages met a carpet was spread out on the ground. The queen alighted, and wished to go on her knees, but the king would not allow her. He raised her up and embraced her on both cheeks with more vivacity than he had ever shown before. He afterwards, with the Duchess of Orleans, got into the carriage with the queen, and remained talking with her most politely for half an hour. He afterwards returned to Fontainebleau, where the queen arrived the next day. She went straight to her dressing-room, and three hours were spent in attiring her. . . . The king sent several times to know when the toilette would be finished."

And d'Argenson declared that he would never forget the terrible calamities which befell the country when Marie Leczinska arrived. The continual rain had produced famine; . . . the peasants had been called upon to mend the roads along which the queen was to pass, which were only made worse, to such a point that her Majesty several times thought that she would be drowned. The queen and her suite were swimming in water at several halting-places. . . .

On the 5th September Marie Leczinska was married to Louis XV. at Fontainebleau, with all the pomp and ceremony usual on such occasions, the Cardinal de Rohan officiating; and in spite of the misery

which stalked through the land, long and expensive festivities were indulged in, to the great disapprobation of those who suffered.

As the sole object of this marriage was to provide for the succession, we turn again to Barbier, who stands us in stead of a Court Journal—

“31st July, 1726.—The king fell ill from indigestion. He had eaten a great many figs and green walnuts, together with milk and other things, for he eats extraordinarily. His illness was serious, and he was bled twice in the foot. The Parliament (probably on his recovery) ordered a *Te Deum* to be sung and salutes to be fired.

“20th August, 1726.—The queen has been very ill. On the 13th she received the last sacraments, and prayers of forty hours were commenced at Notre Dame. The condition of the queen is attributed to the doctors, who bled her in the arm and in the foot three or four times. They know of no other remedy. However, they administered a preparation of antimony, which is much in fashion. To-day she is better and is out of danger. They say that the king is very indifferent to her.

“March, 1727.—The queen is three months gone in the family-way. The king treats her with great kindness, and goes out hunting less often.

“August 14th, 1727.—To-day the queen was delivered of two daughters. Yesterday evening she was sick after eating figs and iced melon, and the doctors looked upon it as an indigestion, for the

accouchement was not expected until September. However, the queen is as well as can be expected, and the king is very proud of his work. He passed a long time in the apartment of Madame de Ventadour, contemplating the two children.

“July 28th, 1728.—The queen has been confined, but as neither cannon nor tocsin was heard, it was surmised that it was a daughter. This was the case. There is great grief at Versailles. The king, however, took the matter in good part, and told the queen that she must engage Payrat, the accoucheur, for a son next year. In spite of preparations there was neither *Te Deum*, salute, or rejoicing.

“4th October, 1728.—Our good queen has seen Paris. She came to Notre Dame to ask the Virgin for a dauphin, and thence she went to Ste. Geneviève for the same purpose. She made this voyage incognito; that is to say, it was not an entry. Her Majesty had merely her ordinary turn-out of four carriages drawn by eight horses each. . . . The queen was received at the doors of Notre Dame by the Cardinal de Noailles, with cross and mitre, at the head of the clergy. . . . The queen wore a flesh-coloured court dress *toute découpée de festons*, no gold nor silver; but she was covered with diamonds, and in her hair wore the *Sanci*, a diamond worth 1,800,000 livres. All the ladies of the Court were magnificently dressed. . . . After having said her prayers the queen went into the chapel of the Virgin and heard mass, which was performed by her chaplain. She

next went to the sacristy, where she took some broth."

When she was returning, we see that "at the gate of the Conference and the gate of Notre Dame, when the queen entered the church, and when she left it, twenty birds were let loose from a basket and flew away. This is a duty imposed upon the corporation of bird-sellers; symbol of the liberty which kings and queens should accord to prisoners.

"As regards the personal appearance of the queen, she is short, rather thin than stout, not pretty without being disagreeable, a kind and gentle appearance, which does not impart any of the majesty requisite for a queen. She seemed very much pleased. She took a long drive through Paris, and saw an astonishing number of people. It is said that 12,000 livres in silver were thrown from her carriage windows."

On the 26th October, 1728, the king was taken ill at Fontainebleau, and to-day it appears that the small-pox has declared itself. The chief doctor has summoned Dumoulin and other famous practitioners from Paris.

"November.—Never did any one have a lighter attack of small-pox than his Majesty. He was neither sick, nor did he have any fever; he slept well, and in this manner, without any remedies, he escaped.

"November 25th.—In a number of churches a *Te Deum* was sung on the recovery of the king. The Receivers-General, who up to that day had ex-

celled the most, had one sung at the *Grands-Jésuites* by Mademoiselle Antier and other opera singers, with 150 musicians. However, they were beaten by the Farmers-General, who had a *Te Deum* sung at the *Jacobins*. . . The crush was so great to get in that it was a regular slaughter. It is said to have cost 16,000 francs.

“September 4th, 1729.—Great event in our State. This morning the queen was confined of a dauphin. A courier was at once despatched to the city and to the First President, and the tocsin was sounded. Already at noon an *ordonnance* had been posted up directing fireworks and illuminations for three days, also that shops should be closed. The aldermen illuminated their houses with lamps and lustres, and at each of the city gates were two barrels of wine, sausages, and rolls. On the fourth day the king went to Paris, where a *Te Deum* was sung. There was also a great display of military, firing of cannons, and in the evening a magnificent bonfire, after which the king supped at the Hôtel de Ville, saw the illuminations, and returned to Versailles.

“Sunday, 11th September.—There was a general procession, all the chapters of Paris repairing to Notre Dame to escort the archbishop to the courtyard of the palace at the foot of the Sainte Chapelle, where a piece of the true cross was exposed. As sixty-eight years had elapsed since the birth of a dauphin, there was some difficulty in finding precedents for the ceremonies. . . .”

It is then related how the great Thomas, an original character who pulls out teeth in the middle of the Pont Neuf, did several fine things in honour of the birth of the dauphin. In fact he announced that for fifteen consecutive days he would draw teeth *gratis*. He was present on a kind of throne at the entry of the king, who is said to have accorded him a pension. Not to be behindhand in the way of generosity, the great Thomas announced that on Monday the 19th he would give a grand banquet to all the people (but if their teeth had been extracted !) on the Pont Neuf. To this effect he purchased an ox, some sheep, and wine. But the police prohibited the banquet, considering that it would be inconvenient in the middle of the bridge. This decision was arrived at on Sunday evening, and on Monday, when the people arrived and saw no signs of a feast, they stormed the house of the great Thomas and broke his windows. The troops had to be called out to protect the dentist, and to disperse the immense crowd which had assembled. Barbier says that the police should not have allowed the great Thomas to purchase his provisions before prohibiting the banquet.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SUCCESSION SECURED.

THE birth of the dauphin, which caused the most intense delight through the whole of France, as well as in Paris, and which was celebrated by Philip V. by a display of fireworks, exercised a considerable influence on the politics of Europe. Up to the last moment the King and Queen of Spain had counted upon the French throne. Now the French succession was assured, and the hoping, dreaming, plotting, and intriguing of years was brought to naught. The Queen of Spain, who had fondly imagined that she would live to see her two sons marry two archduchesses, and that Don Ferdinand would reign in Spain and Don Carlos in France, saw her dreams vanish, and had once more to direct all her ambition to Italy, where Antonio Farnese was being gradually suffocated by fat, and where the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the last of the Medici, was killing himself by his excesses. It was some consolation, however, to think that there was now but a very remote chance of the hated House of Orleans succeeding to the throne. In default of a more brilliant future, the Queen of Spain once more

turned all her attention to obtaining Parma and Tuscany for her sons, and in this Cardinal Fleury was willing to aid her Majesty, for it suited French and English policy, which was to break up the alliance between Spain and Austria. The two branches of the House of Bourbon made up their quarrel over the Infanta; 6000 troops were despatched to hold garrison in Parma and Tuscany. In order to insure possession for the Spanish princes, Spain joined the Hanover allies, and her fragile alliance with Austria, formed in a moment of very pardonable anger, was snapped asunder. Charles VI. was loud in his complaints, and appealed to Russia and Prussia to come to his aid, but his friend Catherine had just died, and the King of Prussia had no idea of sacrificing his big grenadiers to please the emperor. Charles therefore prepared to take the field alone against the Spanish troops, and to oppose their entry into Italy; upon this Spain called upon her allies for help, but neither Cardinal Fleury nor Sir Robert Walpole were ministers who were inclined to draw the sword without having first exhausted every means to settle matters by negotiation.

Fortunately for Europe, at least for the moment, the question which reigned supreme in the mind of the emperor was the Pragmatic Sanction. To obtain the adhesion of the powers to that instrument he was willing to make great sacrifices, and to forego many possible advantages. In order to avert war, England, France, and Spain, after some little nego-

tiating, consented to humour Charles VI. in this matter, and the emperor allowed the Spanish troops to enter Tuscany and Parma, and to take over those duchies for Don Carlos. England, be it observed, insisted upon one secret condition. The emperor had to promise that the archduchess Maria Theresa should not marry a Bourbon.

All immediate prospect of war seemed now to have been removed, but treaties were not strictly observed, and Spain, which under the careful administration of Patinos had re-constructed her navy, and could place 80,000 men in the field, seemed inclined to fight, feeling sore that the emperor had backed out of the double marriages. However, an important event in the north for a while diverted the attention of Europe from other matters. In February, 1733, Barbier wrote—"Important news here. The King of Poland died suddenly on the 1st inst., after having reigned for twenty-six years. It was he who dethroned and expelled King Stanislas Leczinski, the father-in-law of our king. Upon this Samuel Bernard, who lends money to all persons holding high office, advanced four millions to King Stanislas, the Farmers-General also furnishing him with a large sum. Besides, every one is convinced that this prince has an income of 800,000 livres in Poland, the revenues of which have been sequestrated for the last twenty-six years, because he would not renounce the title of king, nor restore the crown and sceptre which he had carried away when he fled the country."

A few days later Stanislas, who was residing at Chambord, went to Versailles to see his daughter. How would France act in this emergency? Augustus II., "the paternal man of sin," wished to be succeeded by his son, Augustus III., and he left a will to that effect. Stanislas, too, claimed the right of re-ascending the throne. Russia was in favour of Augustus III., not wishing to see on the throne of Poland a sovereign dependent upon France. To gain over Austria to his cause, Augustus III. had merely to reverse the policy of his father, and to guarantee the Pragmatic Sanction. Denmark and Prussia were both opposed to the father-in-law of Louis XV. France had her hands entirely free, as on the marriage of his daughter Stanislas had renounced all rights to the throne he had previously occupied. Cardinal Fleury was opposed to the idea of aiding Stanislas, partly owing to his constitutional objection to fighting, and partly because he could not forgive the queen for her attachment to the Duc de Bourbon and Madame de Prie. The cardinal, however, soon felt himself unable to resist the cry for war, and at a cabinet council, over which the king presided with his usual indifference, it was decided that the claims of Stanislas should be supported. Here then was a second war over the marriage of Louis XV.

Although Cardinal Fleury had yielded to popular clamour his measures were dilatory in the extreme. Little or nothing was done to insure the success of

the French candidate, beyond rather bombastic declarations in favour of freedom of election, and Stanislas was allowed to repair to Warsaw in disguise, the whole affair being managed in a manner little worthy of the dignity of a great nation. We read in Barbier—

“September, 1733.—The Polish affair has been conducted with all the prudence and secrecy imaginable. It was reported in Paris and in the Gazettes that King Stanislas had arrived at Brest in order to embark for Dantzic. The fact is, that M. de Thiange left Paris in a post-chaise, wearing the blue ribbon, and on arriving at Brest was received as if he had been the King Stanislas. During this time his Majesty left Versailles incognito, without suite, and took the road for Poland by land. He was in a carriage with the Chevalier d’Andelot, his gentleman-in-waiting, who had a passport as if he were a merchant’s clerk. The Marquis de Monti, the French ambassador, who had received notice of the coming of Stanislas, sent his nephew out to meet him at two leagues from Warsaw, and the king appears to have entered the city on the 8th in the carriage of the ambassador. His presence was greatly in his favour, and on the 12th he was unanimously proclaimed king. The same day he despatched a courier, who reached Versailles on the 20th before midnight. He alighted at the residence of the Keeper of the Seals, who was still at table; they went to see the cardinal, who was going to bed, and then to see the king, who had

already retired. His Majesty, after having opened the packet, clasped the queen round the neck, who on her side embraced him with demonstrations of perfect felicity. After which the queen went to chapel to render thanks to God. The ride of this courier is regarded as very extraordinary, for he accomplished 500 leagues between the 12th and the 20th.¹ He is a Swedish gentleman, who often made the voyage from Chambord to Poland to see how things were going on."

A month later Barbier had to chronicle bad news—

"The Elector of Saxony (Augustus III.) has been proclaimed King of Poland by the confederates beyond the Vistula. King Stanislas has been obliged to leave Warsaw." And in July, 1734—"The affairs in Poland continue in a very bad condition. The army of the Czarina is still engaged in besieging Dantzic, and it will be very difficult for the good King Stanislas, who is in the city, to get out unless he capitulates or escapes in disguise. It is sad to see a legitimate king, the father-in-law of the King of France, reduced to this extremity." Later on the same month—"It appears certain that King Stanislas has been clever enough to make his escape from Dantzic, and that that city, and all the Polish chivalry which followed Stanislas, have recognized the Elector of Saxony (Augustus III.). As the queen is about

¹ The real distance between Paris and Warsaw seems to be 420 leagues.

to be confined, a special *Gazette de France* has been published for her and for her mother, the Queen of Poland, who is at St. Cyr, in which the news concerning Poland is dressed up."

The war of the Polish succession was fortunately not a long one. Stanislas, after reigning for ten days at Warsaw, fled to Dantzic, where Cardinal Fleury despatched 1500 men to his assistance! Comte de Plelo, who commanded this ludicrous contingent, wrote a very touching despatch to the minister Maurepas, saying, "I know that I shall never return; I recommend my wife and children to your care." After forcing his way through three Russian lines the count fell riddled with bullets, while the whole of his gallant little force was captured or slain. As for Stanislas, he made his escape disguised as a sailor.

France afterwards, having a defeat to wipe out, went to work with earnest, and among other successes took Lorraine from the emperor. The consequence of her vigorous action was that peace was restored in 1738 by a treaty signed at Vienna on the following conditions:—Stanislas was to renounce the throne of Poland, and was to receive in return the duchies of Bar and Lorraine, revertible to France on his death in full sovereignty.¹ The Duke of Lorraine in exchange

¹ The Marquis d'Argenson relates how he had a conversation with Stanislas in March, 1737, just before he started to take possession of his new territory. "I told him," says the marquis, "that in Lorraine he procured us a fine acquisition; that in this way the Queen of France brought as her dowry the most desirable province

for his lost duchies was to be compensated with Tuscany. Don Carlos on giving up Parma and Placentia obtained from the emperor the cession of Naples and Sicily, of which he was crowned king. France not only accepted the Pragmatic Sanction, but solemnly engaged to maintain that instrument against any one who should dispute it. England, ignorant that a family compact had been signed between France and Spain with the view of ruining English commerce,¹ had kept out of the Polish war, and Walpole, in support of his policy, was able to boast that "there were 50,000 men slain in Europe this year, and not one Englishman."

The two great Bourbon Houses were friends once more, united by family sympathies and the desire to ruin English commerce. England, on the other hand, as Mr. Green observes, was tired of its monotonous prosperity and its monotonous peace, and found it hard to keep from war in the Southern Sea. With such inflammable matter in the air, it was not difficult to find a pretext for commencing hostilities. In addition to the Pope's meridian, the Assiento ship and other grievances had to be borne, the affair of Jenkins's ear was raised up, all England was roused to madness, and

which France had seen for a long time, more desirable even than Brittany which Anne of Brittany brought us. . . . He said that he intended coming some time to Versailles to see his daughter ; that he was and would always remain French, since his grandsons would reign some day." Three did reign—Louis XVI., Louis XVIII. and Charles X.—reigned in a troubled, intermittent way.

¹ The real family compact was not signed until 1761.

Walpole was no longer able to keep the dogs of war in leash.

The affair of Captain Robert Jenkins of the good ship *Rebecca* is thus related by Carlyle in his *Frederick the Great*:—"London, June, 1731.—Captain Jenkins left this port some months ago with the *Rebecca*; sailed to Jamaica for a cargo of sugar. He took in his cargo at Jamaica, put to sea again 9th April, 1731, and proceeded on the voyage homeward with indifferent winds for the first fortnight. April 20th, with no wind, or none that would suit, he was hanging about in the Gulf of Florida, not far from the Havana, when a Spanish guarda-costa hove in sight, came down on Jenkins, and furiously boarded him. 'Scoundrel, what do you want, contrabanding in these seas? Jamaica, say you? Sugar? Likely! Let us see your logwood, hides, pieces-of-eight!' And broke in upon Jenkins, ship and person, in a most extraordinary manner. Tore up his hatches; plunged down, seeking logwood, hides, pieces-of-eight; found none—not the least trace of contraband on board of Jenkins. They brought his quadrants, sextants, however; likewise his stock of tallow candles; they shook and rummaged him, for pieces-of-eight; furiously advised him, cutlass in hand, to confess his guilt. They slashed the head of Jenkins, his left ear almost off. Order had been given, 'Scalp him!'—but as he had no hair, they omitted that; merely brought away his wig, and slashed—still no confession, nor any pieces-of-eight. They hung him up to the yard-arm, actual neck-halter,

but it seems to have been tarry and did not run—still no confession. They hoisted him higher, tied his cabin-boy to his feet; neck-halter then became awfully stringent upon Jenkins, had not the cabin-boy (without head to speak of) slipped through, noose being tarry; which was a sensible relief to Jenkins. Before very death, they lowered Jenkins. ‘Confess, scoundrel, then!’ Scoundrel could not confess; spoke of ‘British Majesty’s flag, peaceable English subject on the high seas.’ ‘British Majesty; high seas!’ answered they, and again hoisted. Thrice over they tried Jenkins in this manner at the yard-arm, once with cabin-boy at his feet, never had man such a day! outrageous whiskerando cut-throats tossing him about, his poor *Rebecca* and him, at such a rate! Sun getting low, and not the least trace of contraband found, they made a last assault on Jenkins; clutched the bloody slit ear of him; tore it mercilessly off; flung it in his face. ‘Carry that to your king, and tell him of it!’ Then went their way; taking Jenkins’s tallow candles, and the best of his sextants, with them; so that he could hardly work his passage home again, for want of latitudes; and lost in goods £112, not to speak of his ear. Strictly true all this; ship’s company, if required, will testify on oath.”

Such was the story told in the log-book of the *Rebecca*, of which little notice was taken until eight years afterwards, when Jenkins was ordered to attend the House; did attend, told his story, and produced his ear wrapped up in cotton.

Walpole wished to avoid war, but he was carried away by the irresistible current of popular feeling. His negotiations, as Mr. Green remarks, were foiled by the frenzy of one country and by the pride of the other. The peace policy of Walpole, in fact, was founded upon an alliance with France and Holland. He was convinced that, as the two branches of the House of Bourbon had made up their recent difference, war with Spain would lead almost unavoidably to war with France, and war with France he wished at all hazards to avoid, seeing that the Emperor Charles VI. was on his death-bed, and that nothing could preserve the peace of Europe but the union of the Western powers. From his standpoint Walpole took a statesman-like view of the situation. He was not aware of the family compact which had been concluded between France and Spain in 1733 on the outbreak of the Polish War of Succession—a compact concluded for the ruin of the maritime supremacy of England. Spain was gradually to transfer her trade from England to France, and France was to support Spain at sea, and naturally to help her to recover Gibraltar. As Walpole had managed to keep out of the Polish business, the family compact had not been brought into operation during that brief war; but both Spain and France were on the look-out for another opportunity to accomplish their designs. In going to war with Spain, England only anticipated an event which she could not possibly avert.

Walpole was forced to declare war, and England

was soon enveloped in the difficulties which he had foreseen. Hostilities were commenced on the Spanish main. After Admiral Vernon's capture of Portobello, from which harbour the Spanish galleons sailed, and which it was thought might be the prelude to other conquests, Philip V. called upon Louis XV. to fulfil his part in the defensive alliance, and the cry in favour of aiding Spain became general in France. France was not only bound by treaty, but she had just concluded another matrimonial alliance with the Court of Madrid, the eldest daughter of Louis XV. having married Don Philip, the youngest son of Philip V. and his wife Elizabeth Farnese. The paternal instinct was strong in the breast of Louis XV., who was in favour of war; the cardinal would fain have resisted, but public opinion was once more too strong for him, and he was obliged reluctantly to sign an order for the French fleet to put to sea.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PRAGMATIC SANCTION.

THE Pragmatic Sanction was not unconnected with French matrimonial affairs, being mixed up with the Polish alliance of Louis XV., and with that of his daughter and Don Philip of Spain ; then the dauphin of Louis XIV. had married the daughter of the Elector of Bavaria. This fact gave Cardinal Fleury a fine opportunity for displaying his peculiar talent as a diplomatist, when he was called upon to fulfil the promise made by France at the treaty of Vienna in 1738, to defend the Pragmatic against all comers.

It may be mentioned that intimate relations between France and Bavaria had long existed, and that both Richelieu and Mazarin had contemplated the idea of raising to the Imperial dignity the most important Catholic prince of Germany, after the archdukes of Austria. The union between the eldest son of Louis XIV. and the daughter of the Elector Maximilian had merely drawn still closer ties which already existed. During the evil days which fell upon France at the close of the reign of the *Grand Monarque*, the Elector of Bavaria remained faithful

to France; and one of the consequences of this fidelity was that after the battle of Blenheim, in which he took part, he was deprived of his states, which were not restored to him until the treaty of Utrecht in 1714.

By a secret treaty signed the same year, Louis XIV. expressly promised to support the candidature of the Elector of Bavaria to the Imperial throne in the event of a vacancy occurring. This treaty, as concerns the Austrian succession, ran as follows—“The king being persuaded that in default of princes of the House of Austria, no German prince is more capable to maintain the dignity of the Imperial crown, to procure the welfare of religion, and to preserve peace, his Majesty promises that, the Imperial dignity falling vacant, he will employ care and efforts, friends, money, and troops if necessary, to raise his Royal Electoral Highness to the said dignity, agreeing besides to pay particular attention to all propositions or attempts which may be made with the view of bringing about the election of a King of the Romans, to oppose this strongly should there be any question of such election, and to hinder this dignity from being conferred on any person not a member of the House of Bavaria, unless his Royal Electoral Highness has powerful reasons for thinking differently.”

Now the year before this secret treaty was concluded Charles VI., who was still young, and might have reasonably hoped for a numerous offspring, had

taken it into his head to prepare his Pragmatic Sanction, which, if it did not set all Europe by the ears at once, did not prevent a fierce and cruel war breaking out directly he died. "Better an army of 200,000 men than such a document," said the King of Prussia, and he very shortly proved the truth of what he said by sweeping down upon his neighbour's territory, finding it almost defenceless.

According to Carlyle (*Frederick the Great*, Book V. ch. ii.), the document produced in 1724 was executed privately in 1713, and "all men had notice enough of the Imperial bit of sheepskin before they got done with it twenty-five years hence." By this document it was settled that—"Failing heirs male, his daughters, his eldest daughter should succeed him; failing daughters his nieces; and in fact that heirs female ranking from their kinship to the Emperor Charles, and not to any prior emperor, should be as good as heirs male would have been. A Pragmatic Sanction is the high name he gives this document; 'Pragmatic Sanction' being in the Imperial chancery and some others the received title for ordinances of a very irrevocable nature, which a sovereign makes in affairs that wholly belong to himself, or what he reckons his own rights."

Charles VI. of France for example settled the liberties of the Gallican Church by a Pragmatic.

In 1727 matters had changed. The emperor was no longer young; he had two daughters only, and the health of the empress was such as to leave little

hope of any heirs male being born. Under these circumstances Charles VI. endeavoured to obtain from the European powers and the German Diet an adhesion to the Pragmatic. The Elector of Bavaria spoke openly of his claims to the Imperial throne, and as Cardinal Fleury, who had just been called to assume the reins of government, had no reason to depart from the traditions handed down by his predecessors, he made no difficulty about renewing the secret treaty of 1714, to which an additional article thus conceived was added—

“As in default of princes of the House of Austria, the Elector of Bavaria will have just claims to some of the states belonging to that house, and particularly to the kingdom of Bohemia, the king promises, in that case, to interpose his most pressing offices to procure for his Royal Electoral Highness the justice due to him; and, if his offers prove abortive, his Majesty will come to an agreement with his said Electoral Highness as to the succour which will be necessary to hinder him from succumbing to the efforts of his enemies.”

Encouraged by this secret support, the Elector Charles Albert publicly refused to adhere to the Pragmatic, and Cardinal Fleury warmly congratulated him upon his noble attitude, and gave him a formal guarantee against any ill consequences which might arise from the hostility of the Court of Vienna. The fact is, that the cardinal was then being dragged into the Polish war, and himself required allies, and

this was why he offered to renew his alliance with the elector. To this new secret treaty, which was signed in 1733, was joined the promise of an annual subsidy of a considerable amount, to enable the Bavarian troops to take the field if necessary. The new treaty, be it observed, did not engage France to aid the Elector of Bavaria to obtain the Imperial crown, but merely promised to protect him and his states from being troubled or attacked by no matter what enemy.

During 1733 and 1734 the arms of France prospered, and nothing was heard of the Bavarian treaties. In 1735, however, Cardinal Fleury determined to treat with the emperor, and in the month of November of that year the preliminaries of peace were signed—the Duke of Lorraine, the son-in-law of Charles VI., the husband of Maria Theresa, was to cede Bar and Lorraine to King Stanislas, the father-in-law of Louis XV., and to have Tuscany in exchange. France gave her formal adhesion to the Pragmatic! The preliminaries assumed the shape of a regular treaty, which was signed at Vienna in 1738.

The Duc de Broglie in his *Frédéric II. et Marie Thérèse* highly approves of the action of the cardinal. He points out that if the war had been all in favour of France, that was owing to the neutrality of England and Holland, but he could not expect that neutrality to last, and he made under the circumstances an excellent bargain in accepting Lorraine in exchange for his adhesion to the Pragmatic. But

this adhesion to the Pragmatic naturally placed France in a very delicate position in regard to Bavaria. How could the public guarantee given to the emperor be reconciled with the secret promises made to the Elector? This problem the cardinal endeavoured to solve in the long correspondence which ensued between him and the Elector.

On the 7th December, 1736, the cardinal wrote a letter to the Elector which explains the situation. He said—

“Your Royal Electoral Highness reproaches us for not naming him in the preliminaries, which constitutes a regular desertion. But I implore you to weigh the reasons which hindered us. The emperor suspected that we had a secret alliance with you; this we had both distinctly denied. The only question was how to bring about peace between the belligerent powers, and if we had asked to comprise you in the arrangement that would have been a tacit admission that you were one of the number, and we should have been obliged to explain our conventions, or to augment suspicion by refusing so to do. It is true that you declared, when refusing to adhere to the Pragmatic, that you had incontestable rights to the succession of the emperor, but you have never entered into details, and they have not been proved.”

Many more despatches were exchanged between the cardinal and the Elector, the former always profuse in professions of friendship, but protesting at the same time that the French Government had always declared that it could only support Bavaria in the event of the rights of no third party being interfered with. As for the Elector, he was not to be duped by honied phrases; he wrote bluntly in reply to the cardinal's despatch of the 4th November,

1735, saying—"I did not expect that the same person who so often assured me of the friendship and the inviolable word of his Most Christian Majesty would one day announce, in spite of so many sacred ties, that that great prince was on the point of abandoning me. . . Who could believe that a great and powerful monarch, in the midst of victory and prosperity, had been reduced to the necessity of allowing an unjust law to be imposed upon him by an enemy at bay? . . ."

However, no appeal could move the cardinal from the new position he had taken up, to protect the Pragmatic Sanction against all comers, and the elector had to be satisfied with what cold comfort he could obtain in the shape of vague assurances of friendship, and that the lustre of his House should be augmented. In one of the last despatches written upon this delicate subject, dated 22nd October, 1738, we find Cardinal Fleury informing Charles VI. that the Elector of Bavaria had made known the rights upon which he founded his claim to the Imperial throne, and begging his Majesty "to forward without delay such authentic acts as may destroy all the presentations of the Elector." The cardinal declared that he was not in a position to pass judgment in the matter, and this was why he implored the emperor to furnish him with arms, in order that he might defend his cause. In the end the cardinal suggested a compromise—that the Elector should be bought off, and public tranquillity thus assured. "I am far

advanced in life," he concluded, "and would die contented if I had the consolation of tightening once more the knots of an alliance so beneficial to Europe and the interests of the two crowns."

Before anything could come of this negotiation Charles VI. died, 30th September, 1740, suddenly, of indigestion, brought on by eating mushrooms, said the French, but really of a diseased liver and grief, for everything had gone wrong with the empire since the death of Prince Eugene in 1735. France might have adjourned the recognition of Maria Theresa until the claims of Bavaria had been examined, but this course was not adopted. Possibly Cardinal Fleury apprehended that if one portion of the treaty of Vienna were to be violated, the whole treaty would be declared null and void, and that France might lose Lorraine. On the death of the emperor the cardinal not only took no step to procure an examination of the claims of the Elector of Bavaria, but he at once acknowledged the royal title of Maria Theresa. It is true, as the Duc de Broglie observes, that "after having given an ostensible adhesion to the order of succession as laid down by the Pragmatic, and given to the new queen a false security with regard to his intentions, he entered into negotiations with the invader of her states. He consented to support the King of Prussia in a pretension which did not repose on any title. No subtlety can justify a want of good faith so contrary to the rights of nations and to natural equity."

Charles VI. was no sooner dead than the birds of prey swooped down on the empire. It was "first a beak, and then a wing, until the air grew black with ravens." Charles Albert, Elector of Bavaria, claimed the whole carcase, and so did Augustus, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony. Philip V., on the part of Spain, revived claims upon Hungary and Bohemia. The King of Sardinia claimed the Duchy of Milan, and the King of Prussia declared that Silesia belonged, by the right of reversion, to the Electors of Brandenburg.

Referring to the promises made by France, the Duc de Broglie observes, that if any one had an interest in watching over the accomplishment of obligations so sacred, it was certainly the more than octogenarian minister to whom the debilitated Louis XV. had intrusted the direction of his policy. The treaty of 1738 was the personal work of the cardinal, and he was bound all the more to adhere to it because it had established his reputation in Europe as a skilful diplomatist. A short time before the emperor died, on the 26th January, 1740, Cardinal Fleury wrote to Charles VI., saying—"Your Majesty may rest assured that the king will observe with the most exact and inviolable fidelity the engagements into which he has entered with you. . . My sincere gratitude, the interest of religion and that of peace, induce me to adopt the same views. . ."

Was the French minister sincere? The success of the last war was due to the fact of the cardinal

having been able to persuade Europe that he had been dragged into it in spite of all his efforts to avoid fighting. It was in consideration of this that he was enabled to secure the neutrality of England and Holland. Marshal Belle-Isle says in his Memoirs—and he was in a position to know what went on behind the scenes—“The war which the king declared against the emperor (which was terminated in 1738 by the treaty of Vienna) was due to Cardinal Fleury, and was worthy of the greatest of ministers, for he had the cleverness to persuade Europe that he had been forced to take up arms, and in that way to keep the maritime powers quiet. He was once more engaged in playing the same game.”

Maria Theresa, on assuming the purple, sent Prince Lichtenstein to Paris to try and learn the intentions of the cardinal, but neither the prince nor the Elector of Bavaria could obtain any satisfactory reply to their pressing demands, and in the meantime the King of Prussia was preparing to strike. The cardinal was anxious to know what was really going on at Berlin. He could get nothing out of the Prussian ambassador, the Comte de Camas, a Huguenot refugee; nor could Valori, the French ambassador at Berlin, give him much information beyond the fact that Frederick, ever since the 1st November, had been working eight or ten hours a day with Podewils and Schwerin, that they dined together, and that no one could see them. Mischief was evidently brewing. The air was filled with rumours of deeply-laid schemes and vast designs.

It was even reported that Frederick intended to seize the vacant Imperial crown for himself, and it may be easily imagined how alarmed all Catholicism was at the idea of the holy empire falling into the hands of a heretic.

Under these circumstances the cardinal determined to despatch two confidential agents to Berlin to try and find out which way the wind was blowing—the Marquis de Beauveau, a military man, who was to compliment the young king on his accession to the throne, and Voltaire, who was dying to distinguish himself in diplomacy as well as in letters, and who was supported in his pretensions by his friend the Duc de Richelieu and by the Duchesse de Chateauroux. But neither the Marquis de Beauveau nor Voltaire “could see through mill-stones.” The Marquis de Beauveau took a very gloomy view of affairs; his opinion was that Frederick hated France, and was bent on forming an alliance with Austria and England in order to crush her; he was in favour of attacking Austria at once, in conjunction with Prussia and Bavaria, and sharing the spoils. “If this course be not adopted,” he urged, “this bold prince will take advantage of his first success to reconcile himself with Maria Theresa, and we shall have two young sovereigns on our hands. I fear that your Eminence is not sufficiently aware how dangerous a sovereign is the King of Prussia. His conduct more resembles romance than history, but the romance may be followed by the most dire consequences.” In making

this forecast the Marquis de Beauveau gave great proof of his sagacity, for Podewils and Schwerin had persuaded Frederick, rather against his inclination, to seize upon Silesia, in a friendly way, then to negotiate with the Queen of Hungary, and to offer to help her with men and money against her other enemies.

Of Voltaire's mission little is known except that he spent six days with Frederick, and managed to get 3000 thalers out of his Majesty, who complained that this was £75 a day, and that never did court fool receive such wages before.

The position as between Austria and Prussia was this—Frederick, backed by a powerful army, wished to obtain peaceful possession of Silesia. Maria Theresa disdainfully refused to cede an inch of territory. Frederick was right in supposing that she would decline to listen to the overtures which Podewils and Schwerin persuaded him to make. So confident was Maria Theresa in her cause, that while negotiations were going on at Vienna, she got the Bishop of Mayence to declare at Berlin that she would forget everything, provided Frederick asked for pardon. This drew from Bartenstein, the favourite adviser of her Majesty, the remark that one might as well expect the King of Prussia to return to the right road without first chastising him as to wash a Moor white.

Maria Theresa soon became uneasy, and decided not only upon turning towards France, but upon entering into a direct correspondence with Cardinal Fleury. “She addressed the prelate in terms such

as a daughter might employ in writing to a father, or a person of deep religious feeling to a spiritual director." Her Majesty endeavoured to win over the cardinal by speaking by turns of the horror inspired by the perfidy of Frederick, and of the French king, whose honour was pledged to support the Pragmatic Sanction in return for Lorraine. She implored him as a wife, and in the name of the welfare of the Church, not to destroy the union which existed between the two great Catholic powers, and to maintain the Imperial crown in the apostolical family *par excellence*. The correspondence which passed between the youthful sovereign and the crafty old diplomatist exhibits all the peculiarities likely to be found in a passage of arms between a woman and a priest. But all that Maria Theresa could obtain from the cardinal was a few soft speeches couched in sacerdotal or diplomatic language, with just a slight show of gallantry. The cardinal, for example, in replying on the subject of Lorraine, wrote—"It is easy to imagine that the prince your dear husband found it hard to cede the patrimony of his ancestors; but, however that may be, he is well recompensed by the happiness of possessing your Majesty." In fact, as we know, Lorraine by the treaty signed in 1738 at Vienna had been handed over to Stanislas for his life, the Duke Francis of Lorraine getting in exchange not the hand of Maria Theresa, but Tuscany.

We shall say only a few more words here about this war over the Pragmatic Sanction. In alliance with

France and Prussia, the Elector of Bavaria invaded Bohemia ; might have captured Vienna had he marched on that city ; drove Maria Theresa to such a state of despair that she hardly knew where to go for her confinement, and was crowned emperor at Frankfort as Charles VII. But matters soon took a gloomy turn for the new emperor. Frederick the Great acted as the sagacious Beauveau foresaw he would. "His first object," says Macaulay, "was to rob the Queen of Hungary. His second object was that, if possible, nobody should rob her but himself. He had entered into engagements with the Powers leagued against Austria ; but these engagements were in his estimation of no more force than the guarantee formerly given to the Pragmatic Sanction. His plan now was to secure his share of the plunder by betraying his accomplices. . . ."

Maria Theresa was at first inclined to turn a deaf ear to the proposals of the King of Prussia, but her brother-in-law, Charles of Lorraine, having suffered a crushing defeat at Chotusitz, she listened to English advice, and bought Prussia off by the cession of Silesia.

The French and Bavarians then had a fearful time of it ; they were quickly driven out of Bohemia, "the line of retreat being marked by the corpses of thousands of men who had died of cold, fatigue, and hunger." As for Charles of Bavaria, beaten by the Austrians and betrayed by the Prussians, he hurried home to die, leaving his son Maximilian, who renounced all right to the Austrian succession, to come

to what terms he could with Maria Theresa at Fuessen in 1745, in which year Francis of Lorraine, with the general assent of the Germanic body, was raised to the Imperial throne.

Two persons of importance, the Dowager Queen of Spain and Cardinal Fleury, disappeared from the scene at this epoch. In Barbier we find the following entries :—"June.—On the 18th inst. our Dowager Queen of Spain, daughter of the regent, died at the age of thirty-two years. In her will she asked to be buried at St. Sulpice. The public were discontented with the ceremonial observed, contending that as queen, and widow of the king's first cousin, she ought to have been buried at St. Denis. The Spanish ambassador was asked if he would advance the sum necessary for this ceremony, 300,000 livres. He said that he would write to his Court for orders. Times are too bad for Spain and for us to do honour to the dead. However, thanks to an arrangement between the Duke of Orleans (brother of the deceased), the Spanish ambassador, and the curé of St. Sulpice, three days after her death she was buried under the high altar of that church, without pomp. There were no heralds, no prince nor princess was charged by the king and queen to sprinkle her coffin with holy water. None of the foreign powers were represented ; there was no funeral car, the body being conveyed to St. Sulpice in a common carriage.

"January.—Cardinal Fleury is ill, and given over by M. du Moulin. On Sunday he went to mass

supported by two persons. Terrible intrigues are going on at Court.

“The cardinal continues ill, and can swallow nothing. The ministers go to see him when they can, and send every day. The Cardinal de Tencin passes the evening with him. It is said that he plays at piquet with a man called Marquet, and that in the cardinal’s room, in order to amuse him. . . It is a candle which is flickering, and has some trouble in going out. A great many persons are awaiting his death, and all the Court will be frightened of his shadow a week after he is buried.

“For the last eight days the cardinal has been *in extremis*, taking nothing but cordials. The frost is supposed to keep him alive, and he will go off with the thaw. The queen has paid him a visit, more of ceremony than anything else. The king has been three times, but at the last visit he said nothing. His Majesty approached the bed, and as the cardinal did not hear him he retired.”

On the 29th January, 1743, the cardinal expired, and Bachaumont recorded that on the “28th January, 1768, the mausoleum of Cardinal Fleury was unveiled. The cardinal is to be seen in a recumbent position; Religion is receiving him in its arms; at his feet there is France in tears, turning away her eyes from so painful a spectacle; while Hope leaning on an anchor raises its eyes to heaven, whither it is supposed that the cardinal has gone.”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE IMMORALITY OF LOUIS XV.

LOUIS XV. appears to have led a virtuous life until 1735, when he attained the age of twenty-five years, or at least to have been faithful to his wife. After his passion for hunting came that for gambling, in which he indulged with an amount of cupidity shameful in a king, "risking the money of his subjects in the hope of despoiling his courtiers." In addition to this he was addicted to champagne, and seldom left table after supper without being rather the worse for liquor. "A Court without intrigues and a king without passion," says Henri Martin, was not to the taste of the courtiers, who formed a general conspiracy to stir up Louis.

Now his Majesty up to the year 1735 had exhibited almost as much timidity as Louis XIII., but the Duc de Richelieu and his friends were more successful than the Duc de Luynes in arousing the evil passions of the husband of Marie Leczinska. There was this much excuse for Louis XV.: the queen, who was seven years older than himself, was incapable of either amusing or advising him, and the

consequence was, that in time he grew weary of her society, in fact, the weariness became mutual; and when her Majesty was made aware of the infidelities of the king, the coolness which for some time had existed between the royal couple became an estrangement.

Once the ice broken, Richelieu and the courtiers had little to complain of. The first mistress of Louis XV. was the Comtesse de Mailly, who had many good qualities: she was extremely amiable, good-tempered, and neither greedy of gain nor given to intrigue; she never demanded any favours for herself or for her family, lived at Court with becoming modesty, and never interfered in State affairs. Madame de Mailly was the eldest of five sisters of the House of Nesle, none of them very remarkable for their physical or mental charms. The second sister was in the convent of Port Royal, when in 1739, being twenty-four years of age, she persuaded Madame de Mailly to introduce her at Court, where she at once set to work to supplant the countess. She did not entirely succeed, managing only to share the royal favour with Madame de Mailly. She became *enceinte*, and the king arranged her marriage with the Marquis de Vintimille, great-nephew of the Archbishop of Paris, who did not scruple to pronounce the nuptial benediction. On the 5th October Madame de Vintimille was presented to the queen. A third De Nesle, who had married the Duc de Lauraguais, was for a while associated with her elder sister; then came the turn

of Madame de Flavacourt and Madame de la Tour-nelle, who was created Duchesse de Chateauroux, by which name she is known in history. Thus five sisters are said to have been mistresses of the king.

The Duc de Luynes, the Marquis d'Argenson, and Barbier furnish us with much interesting information on the curious state of morality of the Court at this period. Let us see what they say concerning the private life of Louis XV.

“On the 30th August, 1730, at 8 a.m., the queen was safely confined of a son, who was called the Duc d'Anjou. I was at Versailles the evening before, and saw her Majesty at seven o'clock walking in the gardens. The tocsin was sounded at the Palace and at the Hôtel de Ville for three days; fireworks were ordered, and the king came to Paris on the 2nd September to hear a *Te Deum* at Notre Dame.”—*Barbier*.

The little duke was not destined to live. On the 7th April, 1733, Barbier says, “The Duc d'Anjou died to-day at Versailles, at the age of two years and seven months. His death has greatly afflicted the king and the queen, as there are no more males in the family with the exception of the dauphin, who is three years and a half old.”

It is curious to remark, that after the death of the little Duc d'Anjou no less than six daughters were born to Louis XV. and Marie Leczinska, but no son.

“August 1731.—A report was spread at the close of the visit to Fontainebleau which created a great

sensation. The king was found to be very dreamy, and it was everywhere said that he had fallen in love with the young Duchesse de Bourbon,¹ who is only sixteen years of age, who is small but very pretty. Should this rumour be confirmed it will annoy the queen and the cardinal, whom this adventure will draw together; if the young duchess gets the upper hand, and the king listens to her, the cardinal will not be able to remain in office. . . .”

—*Barbier*.

Nothing appears to have come of this affair, unless the fact of “the one-eyed scoundrel” being re-admitted into the king’s council a year afterwards was due to the admiration of his Majesty for the duchess. Cardinal Fleury remained at his post.

“The king’s person is not well known to the public. The Jansenists by profession make out that he knows neither how to listen nor how to speak. I have made inquiries on the subject, and learn from people who approach his Majesty that he is kind, has an excellent memory, knows mathematics thoroughly. . . . He tells stories better than any one when with his friends. . . . He is very timid, and dislikes receptions. He is blindly prejudiced in favour of Cardinal Fleury, but it is difficult to say whether he fears him or loves him most. Once able to shake off his timidity, great things are expected from his good qualities.”—*Barbier*.

“February 24th, 1733.—The third daughter of

¹ In July 1729 the Duc de Bourbon married Caroline of Hesse Rhinfels.

France, Louise Marie, died on the 19th (five years old). This matter has little interest, and no mourning will be worn. For that princesses of France must be seven years of age. She is said to have been the prettiest of the family, and that the king and the queen are very much afflicted by her loss. Yesterday the body was taken to St. Denis, accompanied by the Cardinal de Rohan, the Princesse de Conti, and other ladies. . . .”—*Barbier*.

“The king not being satisfied with the attractions of the queen alone, six months ago took the Comtesse de Mailly, daughter of the Marquis de Nesle, for his mistress; she is well made, young, but ugly, a large mouth well furnished (good teeth); with all that she is amusing, but not clever. Therefore the cardinal has consented to this arrangement, seeing that the king must have a mistress. His Majesty gave her 20,000 francs, and the proof of this is, that her husband, who never had anything better than a hackney coach before, now has a carriage to his taste. This affair is kept secret, as all gallantries should be. . . . It is said that the queen does not know anything for certain, but that she suspects, and consoles herself with M. de Nangis, old as he is. . . .”¹

“Even the king has not been spared in this song in connection with the Comtesse de Mailly. . . .”² It

¹ The Marquis d'Argenson here enters into details, probably due to his imagination, and certainly too intimate for publication.

² The song in question was entitled *La Béquille du père Barnabas*. Barnabas was a Capucin who had gone where he ought

had long been said that the countess was the mistress of the king, now the thing is certain. She is not pretty, but is well made. . . The king for the last six months has not slept with the queen (not wanting any more daughters). It is said that the king gives the countess 6000 livres a month. She might very well get her husband made a duke. No one would offer any objection.”—*D’Argenson*.

In fact, the Comte de Mailly was afterwards offered the title of duke, which he refused.

“For the last fortnight people have been expecting the confinement of the queen, and great preparations were made in town. The king was to come to Paris; but Heaven disposed otherwise. On Monday last the queen again gave birth to a daughter, which makes a good number. French politicians are alarmed, as the king has only one son, and greatly fatigues his constitution.”—*Barbier*.

D’Argenson says—“When they announced the birth of another daughter to the king, instead of the Duc d’Anjou he expected, and asked if she should be called *Madame Septième*, he replied—‘*Madame Dernière*.’ Thence it was concluded that the queen was about to be neglected.”

not to have gone, and had left his crutch behind him. The verse referring to his Majesty runs thus—

“Mailly, dont on babille *chut*
 La première éprouva *la tpe*
 La royale béquille *crutch*
 Du père Barnabas.”

According to M. de Narbonne, the king, on leaving his wife's room, wishing to divert himself, said that she had given birth to a Duc d'Anjou. The news spread from the castle to the town of Versailles, the people clapped their hands, there were extraordinary demonstrations of joy, fireworks were let off, and salutes fired. But when it was known that it was a princess these rejoicings ceased, and were succeeded by a dead calm.

“November.—Never even in the time of the late king was there such an affluence of people at Fontainebleau. It is attributed to these causes: it was believed that Madame de Mailly was about to become the declared mistress of the king. Our greatest princes of the blood have taken possession of her; when out hunting they give her the best place in their carriages. Other grandeurs are in store for her, but the cardinal delays them, and will delay them as long as he remains minister. The nobility have flocked to the Court for this reason: greedy of false greatness, they thought that this elevation of a mistress would exercise an influence on the Government, and would procure changes from which every one thought he would reap advantage.”
—*D'Argenson*.

“About the time of the Christmas *fêtes* the king slept with the queen, after having taken baths prepared in a certain manner with the design of having a prince, if possible. As this had not happened for a long time it was much remarked.”—*Barbier*.

Barbier's next entry says—"The king has fallen ill of a cold, and having a slight fever has been bled. He has been confined to his bed, and has been forbidden to hunt for some time, which ought to give his officers great pleasure, for, in spite of frost, fog, and snow, he is always in the saddle, without knowing why. The persons who approach him find him greatly changed, much thinner, the face drawn and the eyes sunk. This apparently comes from too much fatigue of all kinds. It is thought that he refuses to attend to the affairs of his kingdom himself, and this greatly embarrasses the cardinal (now eighty-six years of age) in the choice of a minister capable of succeeding him."

In February, 1738, Barbier says that the illness of the king was far more serious than a simple cold, that it caused a great deal of uneasiness, and was the subject of frequent conferences between the cardinal and M. la Beyronie, the head surgeon of his Majesty. He also tells us that the conduct of the king was highly improper, and that he had a liaison with a butcher's daughter. The above facts will explain the following entry in the journal of D'Argenson.

"March, 1735.—One of the ladies in waiting to the queen told me that when the king had a syncope, and that they did not know whether he would recover, some persons ventured to speak in her presence of a regency. This matter was brought to the knowledge of the king, who did not blame the queen, his

wrath falling upon Madame de Mazarin, Du Mesnil, her lover, and the Abbé de Broglie. The poor queen said, 'Ah! what a misfortune if such a loss happened!' 'But the government of the country would belong to you,' said her friends; 'and what orders would you give?' 'Ah! what a misfortune,' again ejaculated the queen; who added in a lower tone, 'they will never let me exercise the regency!'"

"July, 1738.—The visit to Compiègne lasted three weeks. . . Madame de Mailly was much fêted. Although she is not the declared mistress of the king, the matter is public. . . It is said that when Madame de Mailly went to take leave of the queen, and to ask permission to go to Compiègne, the queen replied—'You are the *mistress*.'"—*Barbier*.

In January, 1739, we see that Madame de Mailly was still considered as the favourite of the king, and that his Majesty began to have a taste for ordinary pleasures. Barbier added—"It is well that by degrees he should cure himself of his mania for hunting, which, repeated every day, in all weather, only injures his constitution, and renders him still more gloomy and unsociable. The society of ladies and other pastimes will take less time, and will form his talent and his character. On the 23rd the king went to the opera in state, and among the ladies present were two younger sisters of Madame de Mailly—both very pretty persons, while their elder sister has nothing but vivacity in her favour, and is over thirty years of age."

“February 22nd.—After the Council of State held to-day the marriage of Marie Louise Elizabeth of France with the Infant Don Philip was announced. It is said that he may one day become King of Naples, as the Prince of Asturias has no children, both himself and his wife being barren. Therefore Don Carlos, now King of Naples, will in all probability become King of Spain. . .”—*D’Argenson*.

The princess, who would be twelve years old on the 24th August, was to be married on the 15th. “All Europe,” says *D’Argenson*, “is scandalized and alarmed by these marriages declared or not declared.” In addition to the marriage of *Madame Première* with Don Philip, the family ties between France and Spain were to be drawn still closer by the union of the dauphin and the Infanta Maria Theresa.”

“March.—His Majesty ordinarily touches for the king’s evil on Holy Saturday, after having said his prayers. This year, on the pretence of not feeling well, he performed neither this ceremony nor his Easter devotions. This has caused a great scandal at Versailles and much noise in Paris. It renders his intrigue with Madame de Mailly public. It is dangerous for a king to give such an example to his people, and we are on good enough terms with the Pope for the eldest son of the Church to obtain dispensation for Easter, no matter how good his health, without sacrilege and with a tranquil conscience.”—*Barbier*.

“September 14th.—The marriage of Mademoiselle

Pauline Félicité de Nesle¹ with M. de Vintimille is announced. She is the favourite sister of Madame de Mailly. The king assures her a pension of 6000 livres, and 100,000 crowns were drawn from the Treasury for this marriage. It is considered that the cardinal arranged this affair, and people see in this union the reconciliation of the old preceptor of the king with the mistress, which is infamous after all he said about leaving the ministry as soon as the king had a mistress. It is also supposed that Madame de Mailly is on the verge of her disgrace.”—

D'Argenson.

The Duc de Luynes in his Memoirs says that when Madame de Vintimille was presented to the queen in October, 1739, she was accompanied by three of her sisters, Madame de Mailly, Madame de Flavacourt, and Madame de la Tournelle. Her Majesty received them well at first, but then grew rather cold.

No wonder that people suspected that Pauline Félicité was already the mistress of Louis XV., and that her marriage was a blind. D'Argenson again refers to this lady—

“January 21st, 1740.—The young Vintimille gets on very badly with his wife. He says that this great *halberda*² stinks like the devil, and he calls her his little goat. He is in love with his sister-in-law, Madame de Flavacourt. . .” And—

¹ The second of the five daughters of the Marquis de Nesle.

² Ill-conditioned and badly-made woman.

“January 24th.—Bachelier¹ sees the cardinal for about an hour every day. It is said to be a question of getting the king to fall in love once more with his wife. . . Madame de Mailly is losing all empire over the heart of the king; it is every day remarked that his Majesty will not submit to be governed by women. With that he fears the devil. Father de Linières, supported by the cardinal, refuses to give him absolution, and this often renders the king uneasy; as soon as he has the slightest ailment the fears of hell get hold of him. . .”

On the 29th January the Duc de Bourbon died, and Louis XV. on hearing the news fainted away. D’Argenson chronicles this event, and says—

“It is asserted that the king retains a taste for Madame la Duchesse, now a widow, and that he may take her into his service, and abandon Madame de Mailly; it is known upon good authority that his confessor promises to give him absolution if he does such a good stroke of business, because, being a widow and free, the sin will be less by half, whereas Madame de Mailly’s husband is alive, and so there is double adultery.”

D’Argenson says that the king at this time had a violent cold, and spit blood, adding—

“24th May.—Is it known of what crimes ambition and vengeance are capable? If the queen were to become regent even for a few years, I see her surrounded by such sinners and hypocrites as the

¹ The king’s pimp.

duchesses of De Villars, Mazarin, and Goutaut, by all the constitutional, perfidious, and intriguing bishops, the Cardinal de Tencin, the Noailles, the Abbé de Broglie—these are the people who would govern the State under a foreign and idiotic queen. . .

“May 31st.—The king coughs very little. He was cured by some turnip soup which was prepared by the hands of love. Madame de Mailly made it herself. His Majesty had a dressing-gown which displeased him. Madame de Mailly at once selected a new one, which was charming, had it made during the night, and the king found it the next morning on his dressing-table.

“As a reward for the turnip soup and the dressing-gown, Madame de Mailly recovered for a while her waning favour. The king recalled her father, who had been exiled to Normandy, and gave Madame de Mailly herself the tolls of the bridge of Neuilly, worth 20,000 livres a year.”

D'Argenson has left a curious but over-wrought sketch of the queen at this epoch, showing that if Louis XV. took a mistress it was her fault. D'Argenson derived his information, he tells us, from a lady of the palace, who brought the following accusations against her Majesty: “that she was prudish, that no one had less *esprit*, that she considered it the right thing to despise her husband, that she used to say, ‘Eh quoi! toujours coucher, toujours grosse, toujours accoucher;’ that she was

afraid of ghosts, and when in bed, with the king by her side, had some woman to hold her hand all night, and tell her stories to put her to sleep; that she used to get up frequently in the night, that she was very chilly, and had mattresses over her which nearly smothered the king. . . He was therefore led little by little to take a mistress, who is not pretty, but of whom he is very fond.

“January 17th, 1741.—The king and Madame de Mailly have quarrelled like children. Worsted work is all the fashion at Court; Madame de Mailly was so absorbed in this occupation that she did not reply to the king when he spoke to her. At last the king lost patience, threatened her, and then drawing a knife cut her piece of work in four; horrible quarrel and sulks. . . .”—*D’Argenson*. After which his Majesty supped with the favourite, and the quarrel of the lovers was the renewal of love.

“His Eminence has become jealous of the ladies who enjoy the favour of his master. . . The other day the Duc d’Antin having asked him several questions respecting the voyages of the king, the cardinal replied, laughing—‘Eh! sir, you have lady friends who are better informed than I am’”—meaning Madame de Vintimille. “It is true that the voyage to Compiègne was arranged to take place after the confinement of Madame de Vintimille. . . . M. de Vintimille held this language concerning the interesting condition in which his wife finds herself—‘I do not know whose child it is; it is certainly

not mine; it is the king's, the Duc d'Ayen's, Forcalquier's, or my valet St. Jean's.' . . Madame de Mailly is jealous of her sister. The other day she said that she was less bony and whiter than Madame de Vintimille, upon which the king exclaimed—'Don't bet, you would lose.'"—*D'Argenson*.

"August 11th, 1741.—Great adventure at Court; Madame de Vintimille has fallen ill at Choisy—of a fever only. The king went to Versailles to pass two days; he receives four couriers a day from the sister of his mistress. He returned to Choisy on Thursday evening, and spent three days there, in spite of his promises to the cardinal. The trips to Choisy will no doubt succeed each other rapidly. He would not do this for the queen."—*D'Argenson*.

"August 13th.—Madame de Vintimille is *in extremis* at Choisy, where the king remains with Madame de Mailly, who is in despair at losing so good a sister. According to others she is one of the worst of women, and to render herself perfect took the Duc d'Ayen for her lover. . ."—*D'Argenson*.

"August 21st.—The king is as attentive to Madame de Vintimille as if she were his declared mistress. . . The king has again returned to Choisy to see her. She is to arrive at Versailles in triumph on Tuesday in a litter. . . Her husband is quite separated from her, and has not seen her for a long time. Madame de Vintimille takes matters in a very lofty way, and will not hear the family into which she entered mentioned. The Archbishop of Paris sent her a

magnificent *layette*,¹ which she refused with contempt. . . . She is said to have gained a great ascendancy over the mind of the king, and that her sister is jealous; there is supposed to be a certain amount of antipathy between them. . . .”—*D'Argenson*.

“August 28th.—The king has returned to Versailles for good, Madame de Vintimille having been conveyed there in a litter. At Choisy the king showed her the greatest marks of friendship; she much annoyed the faculty, as she would take nothing the doctors ordered. The king went on his knees at her bedside to implore her to get well. . . .”—*D'Argenson*.

“September 5th, 1741.—Madame de Vintimille, the well-beloved sister of the favourite Sultana, has at last been safely delivered, although great fears were entertained as to her health. She has given a boy to the family, and the Archbishop of Paris, her uncle, came to give the child his blessing an instant ago. . . . M. de Vintimille says everywhere that he has nothing to say to the infant.”—*D'Argenson*.

D'Argenson then makes the following astounding reflection—“It is one of the least of evils which one can inflict upon society to beget children for those who have none, and who have property to leave them; the only sufferers are the collaterals, who ought not to be allowed by law to succeed. . . . Here then is M. de Vintimille a father in spite of himself. . . . The king goes to see the *accouchée* four or

¹ Suit of baby-clothes.

five times a day. She is lodged in the apartment of the Cardinal de Rohan, which throws ridicule on the Grand Almoner of France.

“September.—Madame de Vintimille has been confined of a son, *apropos* to whose birth her husband held some bad language, not having had any share in the child, who is said to be of much higher rank.” The child, in fact, who is said to have greatly resembled the king, was called at Court the *Demi-Louis*.

“The poor countess died a few days afterwards. She was ugly, but very witty, and amused the king, who invited her to all his parties. . . Every one is surprised at the real grief which this death has caused the king. He was never so much affected before, and he has made too great a display of this in public. He would see no one on the day of her death, and for several days he retired to St. Leger with Madame de Mailly and a few friends.”—*Barbier*.

D’Argenson in his account of the death of Madame de Vintimille makes out that the conduct of the king was actuated by his love for Madame de Mailly—the attentions of his Majesty before her death, and his extravagant display of grief afterwards. On the 10th September D’Argenson chronicled the fact that M. de Vintimille raised objections to the child receiving his name when he was christened, but that the king interfered, and gave express orders that the infant should be received into the bosom of Mother

Church as the son of M. de Vintimille, and the Archbishop of Paris and the father of M. de Vintimille, like good politicians, at once acknowledged the bantling.

“September 11th.—The king is in the most terrible grief for Madame de Vintimille; he sobs, he chokes; the cardinal, who did not dare to speak to him at first, has at last preached him a sermon on the subject of human weakness. He was very badly received. Unable to contain himself, the king the evening before last went to St. Leger with Madame de Mailly, the Duc d’Ayen, and the Duc de Villeroi. . . This morning the king ordered a cast of the face of Madame de Vintimille to be taken in wax, although she was ugly. As she died in convulsions, she remained with her mouth open. . .”—*D’Argenson*.

In spite of appearances, D’Argenson was not to be persuaded that Louis XV., with “the best heart in the world,” could have been guilty of an incestuous passion, and he cursed the age which “turns all virtues into vices and vices into virtues.” Then he chronicles—

“September 13th.—When the king was so deeply plunged in grief he remained in bed until 4 p.m. The cardinal entered, but remained only a moment; the king could not talk to him; he was stifled with sobs; the queen wished to enter, but she was refused the door. . .

“September 15th.—The affliction of our monarch is always the same; he has shut himself up at St.

Leger with Madame de Mailly, in order to console her with all the kindness possible. . .”¹

The next day D’Argenson, after once more explaining the real cause of the grief of the king, jotted down the interesting fact of the arrival at Court of the last sister of Madame de Mailly. This was none other than Marie Anne de Nesle, who became Madame de la Tournelle, and then Duchesse de Châteauroux. “It is proposed to admit her into society, but she is simply a chatterbox,” observes the marquis.

“October 25th.—An apartment is being furnished for Madame de Mailly, which will be worthy of the declared mistress of the monarch. . . Madame de Mailly at present drives out *tête-à-tête* with the king. It is pretended that there is some chance of the king turning devout. Madame de Mailly goes every day to hear mass said on the tomb of her departed sister. The king recently bestowing charity on a poor man, said—‘Ask God to be merciful to me, for I have much need of it.’ It is feared that in a short time he will be reading his breviary with Madame de Mailly.”—*D’Argenson*.

“November 21st.—The king turns to devotion since the death of Madame de Vintimille. In the

¹ The Duc de Luynes says in his *Memoirs*, t. iii. p. 482, that the voyage to St. Leger was very serious, that Madame de Mailly did not play at all, and that the king played at nothing but trictrac. However, there were several religious discourses, the king saying that it was necessary to suffer, and that he was no more exempt from suffering than any one else, and, in fact, that he ought to suffer more than ordinary mortals.

limited society to which he confines himself, nothing is spoken of but religion. . . His Majesty wishes to live with Madame de Mailly as the Duc de Bourbon is said to have lived with Madame d'Egmont, as a friend, with hardly any carnal connection, and that only by accident; then quick to confession. . .”—*D'Argenson*.

“December 14th.—It is said that the king has changed his mistress, that nothing is more sure, and that the greatest mystery is observed. . . If the poor De Mailly has been dismissed she has only got what the mediocrity of her character deserved; she was a regular goose. Madame de Vintimille entirely governed her. She spoke her mind out against Bachelier and M. de Chauvelin. She said to the king—‘Well, Sire, are you going to tell all that to your *valet de chambre*?’ Horrible things happened to her dead body shortly before she was buried; the people of Versailles were beside themselves with joy; they said that she was a vile animal, that she hindered the king from residing at Versailles, that she had lured him away from her sister, and that the Mailly was a good woman. She was taken from the castle to the Hôtel de Villeroi with merely a shroud over the body, and there the servants left her and went to drink, as often happens; the people went up-stairs and seized on her remains; they threw petards on the body, and subjected her ugly corpse to all kinds of indignity, which showed barbarity, and little respect for the king.”—*D'Argenson*.

CHAPTER IX.

PRIVATE LIFE OF LOUIS XV. CONTINUED.

“NOVEMBER 5th.—Great news! the king has dismissed Madame de Mailly in order to take her sister, Madame de la Tournelle. This was done with a harshness difficult to understand on the part of a most Christian Majesty; it is the sister who has the sister driven away; she insists upon exile;¹ and this third sister taken for mistress makes people believe that Madame de Vintimille was mistress also, which seems to prove that we have a vicious master. As for myself, I always maintained that the extreme grief of the king on the death of Madame de Vintimille was caused by a praiseworthy consideration for Madame de Mailly. But farewell virtuous sensibility; he deceived his mistress; he encouraged the ingratitude of Madame de Vintimille; he wept simply over his illegitimate passions. What was more, Madame de Vintimille was ugly, thin, and unodorous (*puante*). It is asserted that had she lived the king would have dismissed both Madame de Mailly and the cardinal. He considers the little

¹ Four leagues from Court.

child she left behind her as his son"—the *Demi-Louis*. "Madame de Mailly is extremely frank, and is gifted with an excellent heart; she is kind to her friends and her parents, and wrongs no one. . . She admits having accepted the advances of the king owing to extreme poverty, and having been two months without loving him; but after that her love went on augmenting; and the disinterestedness of which she is the victim to-day was caused by a fear of hurting the feelings of her lover. She is in want of bread, and leaves large debts behind her, incurred by the necessity of pleasing the king. . . ."

D'Argenson afterwards adds, that although the king refused to pay the debts of Madame de Mailly, it was believed that he had secretly ordered the cardinal to settle with the creditors, cutting down their accounts. As for Madame de Mailly, "she starts to-morrow for Nesle, to stay with her father in Picardy. Every one regrets her at Versailles, but no one dares to speak out for fear of the king. Morality and public honesty will suffer by this example. The cardinal, quite triumphant, thinks that he has no longer anything to fear. . . ."

One of the great griefs against Madame de Mailly was that she supported the party of M. de Belle Isle, and then Marshal de Maillebois, who gave so much cause for complaint, having so ill managed military matters in Italy, that it was a question at one moment of having him executed.

"November 17th.—. . . Madame de Mailly meddled

with what did not concern her; she meddled too much. One of the king's hobbies is not to allow himself to be found out, to remain impenetrable. Madame de Mailly did not know where to stop; the king got tired of her; she had a limited amount of understanding, and was plain. This is quite enough to explain her disgrace. The king showed himself rather superior to prejudice in taking her sister; as a matter of fact, however, what harm has this done to his neighbour?"

In such manner does D'Argenson blow hot and cold.

"27th June, 1743.—It is said that the king sent away Madame de Mailly with inhumanity. But how many things are to be excused by youth and passion! The place was taken; the sister pleased him; he could not take one until the other was gone." And why not as in the case of Madame de Vintimille?

There appears to have been another reason, not mentioned by D'Argenson, which delayed for a while the substitution of Madame de la Tournelle for Madame de Mailly. The lady was deeply in love with the *beau d'Agénois*. M. de Maurepas says in his *Memoirs*¹ that—

"The Duc d'Agénois, after having been for a long time attached to the Princess de Conti, was violently in love with Madame de la Tournelle, when the king took a fancy to her; and their love was of such a character that Madame de la Tournelle did not think

¹ Tome iv. p. 14.

it right to deceive M. d'Agénois for the king. Louis XV. when he fell in love with Madame de la Tournelle in his turn sent her lover to fight in Italy, where he distinguished himself. He was wounded, and so was Madame de la Tournelle on hearing the news, which for a moment grieved the king."

His Most Christian Majesty, in fact, imitated David, but the *beau* Agénois was more fortunate than Uriah ; he was not slain, but lived to serve his country as Duc d'Aiguillon.

"October 21st, 1743.—At Fontainebleau the king declared Madame de la Tournelle to be Duchesse de Châteauroux. . . . The king has formed a considerable household for her. There will be no 'little suppers.' The king will sup with the Duchesse de Châteauroux ; all this will be on a grand scale, as in the time of Louis XIV. She becomes a great lady. It is said that she will shortly be confined. The king has given her a hotel in Paris and an apartment at Versailles, and some superb furniture. This must mortify Madame de Mailly ; although she appears to have given herself up to devotion, she must feel this all the same."—*Barbier*.

"November.—The king is said to have quarrelled with Madame de Mailly. The reason is not known ; the rupture is said to have been very lively. Madame de Mailly having spoken out her mind, the king had all the furniture taken out of her apartment, and told her that there was a post-chaise at the door which would take her where she liked. She is said

to be stopping at the Hôtel de Toulouse, where she is ill. At the same time it was noised abroad that it was a sermon by the curé of St. Bartholomew on All Saints day which had touched the king; but there is quite another story on the *tapis*. The king is said to have quarrelled with Madame de Mailly in order to take for mistress her sister, the Marquise de la Tournelle, recently appointed lady-in-waiting to the queen. This causes a good deal of lively discussion. Madame de la Tournelle is young and pretty. It is said that she has made her conditions—that she shall be the declared mistress, that she shall have 50,000 crowns a year assured for life, &c., &c., &c. It is said that the king is going to pay the debts of Madame de Mailly (who was quite disinterested), and to give her a pension of 50,000 livres.”¹

“On Sunday first trip to Choisy with Madame de la Tournelle. The other persons were Mademoiselle de la Roche-sur-Yon, princess of the blood, the Duchesse de Luynes, the Duchesse de Chevreuse, a lady of great virtue, Madame de Flavacourt, sister of Madame de la Tournelle, and Madame d’Antin, young and very pretty.”—*Barbier*.

The Duc de Richelieu in his Memoirs relates, in the most unblushing way, how he managed to bring about the liaison between Louis XV. and Madame de la Tournelle, and the part which the king condescended to play. When his Majesty first conceived a passion for the youngest of the five sisters of the

¹ A fifth of the sum which her sister bargained for.

House of Nesle, the lady was deeply attached to the Duc d'Agénois, the son of the Duc d'Aguillon and nephew of the Duc de Richelieu. The first step to take was to cure Madame de la Tournelle of her passion, and the better to effect this Richelieu sent his nephew to Languedoc, where a very pretty woman had been instructed to lay siege to his heart. Letters of an amorous description were exchanged; the lady despatched those which she received to Richelieu, Richelieu handed them to Louis XV., and his Most Christian Majesty laid them before Madame de la Tournelle, quizzing her about the fidelity of the handsome D'Agénois.

Madame de la Tournelle did not yield at once; she made some show of resistance, and as Louis XV. was no impulsive lover like Henri IV., or even like Louis XIV., Richelieu more than once feared that the whole affair would fall through. However, in the end, by dint of patience, he arranged an interview, and one night the king and the duke, disguised as doctors, with large square wigs and long black cloaks, paid the fair one a visit, when preliminaries were arranged, and his Majesty agreed to dispense with the services of Madame de Mailly.

Shortly after this interview Madame de la Tournelle wrote the following astonishing letter to the Duc de Richelieu—

“I have shown the king your letters, which diverted him: he assures me that he never told Madame de Mailly that it was you who managed the affair, but only that he had acquainted you with the fact, and that you had accompanied him in his visit. As you

may imagine, a great many stories will get afloat. You have only to maintain always that you knew nothing of the affair until it was far advanced; this will be more proper for me. I do not wish to appear to have searched for this advantage, nor my friends for me. . . . Assuredly Meuse will have told you of all the trouble I had to make Madame de Mailly pack off; at last I got him to write that she was not to come here unless invited. You think, perhaps, that the affair is finished? Not at all: the fact is, that he is sorely afflicted, that he never writes me a letter without mentioning this that he wishes me to let her back, and that he will not *approach* her. He asks to be allowed to see her sometimes. I have at this moment received a letter from him in which he says, that if I refuse I shall shortly be relieved of her and of him, meaning apparently that they will both die of grief. As it would never suit me that she should return I intend to hold out. As I have entered into no engagement, of which I am very pleased, he will have to decide between her and me. I foresee, dear uncle, that all this will give me pain. As long as the cardinal lives I shall never be able to do as I like. This sometimes inspires me with a desire to take the old scamp into my interests by going to see him. This apparent confidence might perhaps gain him over. This deserves reflection. As you may imagine, every one is on the look-out, and all eyes are turned upon the king and me. As for the queen, you may guess that she growls at me like a dog. The ladies who are to go to Choisy are Mademoiselle de la Roche-sur-Yon and Madames de Luynes, de Chevreuse, d'Antin, de Flavacourt, and your very humble servant. He did not dare to go even to Choisy. It is I who said that I wished him to go. No one will lodge in the apartment of Madame de Mailly; I shall be in that which is called yours, that is to say, if M. Duberdge has any intelligence, for the king won't give any orders on the subject. He must have written to you this morning to say that the affair between us is settled, because he tells me in his letter of this morning to undeceive you. It is true that when he wrote he thought it would be for this evening, but I have raised some difficulties as to execution, of which I do not repent."

The cynicism and cruelty of this letter are too revolting to need comment.

"January 17th.—Parliament was assembled this

morning to enregister letters patent conferring the duchy of Châteauroux on Madame de la Tournelle and heirs male. . . . The preamble sets forth the great services rendered to France by the House of Nesle, the personal attachment of the lady, the services she has rendered to the queen, her virtues, rare qualities of heart and mind. The Chamber gravely listened to these *fleurettes* told by the monarch concerning his mistress. . . .”—*D'Argenson*.

“7th April.—The Duchesse de Châteauroux has now been the mistress of the king for two years. His Majesty is, as they say, satiated, and has nothing more to say to or do with her; she is tempted to believe that he is unfaithful and impotent. Such was his conduct to Madame de Mailly two years before he dismissed her.

“Madame de Flavacourt, the sister of Madame de Châteauroux, handsome, but false, and with little intelligence, has been ogled by the king, and has replied; there was some question of a bargain in imitation of her sister. She wished, as first condition, that Madame de Châteauroux should be sent away. The king feared, no doubt, that such a proceeding would afford a new subject of scandal for the public, and a great expense in order to satisfy the incoming mistress. The first person that his Majesty consulted on the subject was Madame de Châteauroux, who said, ‘Sire, you can turn me away if you like; but I begin by asking that I may be dismissed at once, or else my sister.’ . . .”—*D'Argenson*.

The Duchesse de Châteauroux triumphed, and Madame de Flavacourt was no more invited to the private suppers at La Muette and at Choisy. D'Argenson, continuing his chronicle for the 7th April, adds—
“*Sa Majesté s'est trouvé quelque fois assez d'appétit pour tâter de cette grosse vilaine de Lauraguais, de sorte que voilà les cinq sœurs exploitées!*”

But D'Argenson, surnamed “*l'enfant terrible de la royante*,” had no right to fling stones at Louis XV., having himself played a prominent part in the ignoble conspiracy which led to the substitution of Madame de la Tournelle for Madame de Mailly.

Louis XV. had little taste for soldiering, but at last he felt obliged to imitate the example of the kings his ancestors, Henri IV., Louis XIII., and Louis XIV., and to show himself at the head of his troops.

D'Argenson notices the departure of his Majesty thus—

“3rd May, 1744.—The War Minister started for Flanders yesterday, the king goes this morning. . . . Every one follows the army—grand master, chamberlains, cooks. The mistress alone remains behind. The two Duchesses de Châteauroux and Lauraguais went the day before yesterday to embrace the War Minister! These ladies are coming to Paris to-day to mourn over so painful an absence; they will go to the opera. . . .”

But the duchesses did not long remain behind.

“5th May.—The king supped the day before yesterday with the War Minister at Peronne. . . .

The two duchesses are going to Lille, where M. de Boufflers has had arrangements made for them, and so the king will have his private suppers at Lille like those at Versailles. This looks more like a man accustomed to be subjugated than a man of strong passions.

“6th May.—The king has written to Madame de Ventadour a very touching letter of farewell, finely and nobly expressed, and even devout; he implores the God of Battles to support him, and to bless his good intentions.¹ . . . The queen remains quite alone at Versailles with her poor family.”—*D'Argenson*.

“14th May.—The king has written a reply to the dauphin, who wished to follow the army. His Majesty answered that the life of the dauphin was too precious to the State until he had been married and had insured the succession.” M. de Maurepas gives this letter in his Memoirs—“‘When you have children,’ continued the king, ‘I promise that I will never take the field without you; but I desire and hope never to be in a position to carry out my promise. As I make war merely to insure for my people a good and durable peace, should God bless my intentions, I shall always sacrifice everything to procure this advantage. I hope that you will be inspired by the same sentiments, and that you will accustom yourself

¹ The king always entertained the most lively affection for the Duchesse de Ventadour, invariably calling her *ma mère*. She died in December, 1744, at the age of ninety-three, respected and beloved by all who knew her.

to look upon yourself rather as the father than as the master of those who will one day be your subjects.' ”

A second application on the part of the dauphin met with a similar reply.

“30th June.—. . . People pretend that it is a stain on the glory of his Majesty to have brought his mistress to the army. . . . What a foolish prejudice to find fault with pleasures which do no harm to any one! The Flemings are superstitious; they were told that the king had three sisters, and they are scandalized to see this one arrive at Lille. Two hours after her arrival the barracks caught fire, which they attributed to celestial anger. . . .”—*D'Argenson*.

D'Argenson then tells us how the king dined with his handsome mistress at Laon, and how the *badauds* of that town waited outside the door, and hailed his Majesty with cries of *Vive le Roi!* when he left. Upon this his Most Christian Majesty tucked up the tails of his coat and fled into a garden. We then learn that the Duchesse de Châteauroux fell ill at Rheims of an *ébullition*, which delayed the king on his way to Châlons. “His Majesty could speak of nothing else but the malady of Madame de Châteauroux, except where he should bury her, and what kind of tomb he should erect in her memory.”

From Barbier we gather the following particulars concerning the illness of Louis XV. at Metz—

“Aug. 7th.—The king has fallen ill at Metz. He has a slight fever, which was at first attributed to fatigue, or perhaps the chagrin caused by Prince

Charles crossing the Rhine and his troops laying all the country waste. There had also been a grand supper, during which a great many glasses had been emptied in drinking the health of the King of Prussia, with whom the conclusion of a treaty now appears certain. . . . Between the 7th and 11th the king was bled and physicked three times. This was concealed from the public, who thought that his Majesty had left for Strasburg. The fever soon became malignant and dangerous, and on the 14th the king was *in extremis*; he could not speak, and was out of his mind for five hours. This misfortune was not known in Paris. . . . However, on the night of the 14th a courier arrived with the tidings that the king had received the last sacraments, and with an order for the queen, the dauphin, and Mesdames to start at once for Metz, as the king had asked to see them. The necessary orders were given. There were no longer any means of concealment. The next day, being the Assumption, the news spread through Paris. The queen passed along the Boulevards at 8 a.m. The dauphin is to start at noon, and Mesdames at 6 p.m.

“This news has thrown Paris into a state of alarm and consternation impossible to depict. On Sunday and the following days the people awaited the arrival of the couriers with the greatest anxiety. Orders were given at Notre Dame and other places for prayers of forty hours . . . At 7 p.m. on the 16th I went to see M. de Maurepas, but he had no

news. It was thought that the king was dead. On the 17th all Paris flocked to the coach-office or sent there. Tears were in every eye; about ten o'clock came a courier, who reported that the king had passed a better night, that he had gone to sleep, and on awaking had less fever." In fact, so great was the anxiety for news of the health of Louis XV., that at last bulletins had to be published and posted up in various parts of the city and on the doors of the ministers, and the city authorities established special relays of their own, so as to have news twice a day from Metz.

"By the couriers who arrived on the 20th and 21st it appeared that the king was much better, but it is certain that on the 14th the doctors had no hope of saving him. It is said that this illness was brought on by a sunstroke, by an indigestion, by a supper where too much wine had been imbibed, and by exhaustion the following night. There is a general cry raised against the Duc de Richelieu, the Duchesse de Châteauroux, and M. de Peyronie, the head-surgeon. During the first three days they pretended that the fever was an ordinary one, and they shut themselves up with the king and would not allow any one to enter. It was said that they even refused the door to the Duc de Bouillon, the Grand Chamberlain, but this was not true. . . . It is said that the Duc de Richelieu did all he could to delay Father Pérusseau, the Jesuit confessor of the king, being admitted; but M. FitzJames, Bishop of Soissons,

Almoner in Chief, sent for the Jesuit, seized upon the king, exhorted him to prepare for death, and made him receive the last sacraments in the most authentic and solemn manner. When the extreme unction had been administered the king allowed every one in Metz but the mob to enter, and there was consequently a great crowd. The Bishop of Soissons persuaded his Majesty to make an *amende honorable* to God and to his people for the scandal of which he had been guilty. He admitted that he had been unworthy to bear the name of Most Christian King and eldest son of the Church, and he promised to execute all the conditions exacted by the Bishop of Soissons. These were to send away the Duchesse de Châteauroux; upon which the king himself added—‘And the Duchesse de Lauraguais also, who is her sister.’ The consequence was that M. d’Argenson was despatched with an order from the king for the two duchesses to withdraw to four leagues from Metz; and at midnight a second order was sent telling them to go further still, and so they left for Paris. This had caused such a scandal at Metz, that when leaving they were obliged to let down the blinds of their carriage to avoid being insulted by the people. . . . After the great supper the Duc de Richelieu shut the king up with the two sisters, and the next day he spit blood. This was the cause of the fever and the headache. . . .”

Barbier disapproves of the publicity given to this affair, and thinks that a great scandal might have

been avoided by sending the duchesses away quietly. He also blames the part played by the ecclesiastical authorities, adding—"I don't know what will happen three months after the re-establishment of the king's health." He then informs us that—"The Comtesse de Mailly is here in Paris in 'high devotion.' Since the news of the king's illness came she has not left the churches. . . . People now begin to pardon and to esteem her. On the other hand, there is a great outcry against Madame de Châteauroux, who is looked upon as having caused the illness of the king. Madame de Châteauroux makes a very shameful exit. Fresh suspicions are entertained concerning Madame de Lauraguais. It is scandal upon scandal!"¹

The king had some reason for being angry with the Dukes of Villeroi, Bouillon, and La Rochefoucauld, and FitzJames, Bishop of Soissons, for his illness was not serious—merely a fit of indigestion, which a quack cured with an emetic. And it was for this indigestion that he had humiliated himself in the sight of God and men, had made his *amende honorable*, had sent away the duchesses, and had promised to sin no more. His Most Christian Majesty felt that an unfair advantage had been taken of him, and that his religious feelings had been unnecessarily worked upon.

¹ Madame de Châteauroux having been dismissed, Madame de Lauraguais was disconsolate at having lost her time, for she aspired to be declared, and to play her sister Châteauroux the same trick which Châteauroux had played Madame de Mailly.—*Memoirs of Maurepas*, t. iv. p. 94.

M. de Maurepas in his Memoirs has given several accounts of the king's illness. In one of these we find that—"The queen arrived on the night of the 19th. The king awaited her with great impatience, and she remained with him only an instant before retiring to her room. There was a good deal of feeling evinced on both sides ; she had been greatly delayed on the road. The dauphin arrived at three o'clock the next afternoon, and although he much desired to see the king, the princes of the blood begged him not to do so, and even the faculty, after discussing the matter, decided that it would not be right for him to see his father, who was not aware that he had left Versailles ; in their opinion such a visit might be attended with danger. . . . The queen is nursing the king, and Madame de Villars is helping her."

Barbier was no doubt mistaken in saying that the king had sent for the dauphin.

"10th Nov.—The Duc de Châtillon, governor of the dauphin, and the Duchesse de Châtillon, lady of honour to the dauphiness, have been disgraced"—exiled from Court. "The duke, it is said, for having taken the dauphin from Verdun to Metz in spite of the king's orders during the illness of his Majesty ; for having shut himself up for hours together with the dauphin and the Bishop of Soissons ; for having given his pupil lessons in morals at the expense of the king his father ; and for having shown him the communication which existed between the

apartments of the king and those of the Duchesse de Châteauroux." The Duc de Châtillon and his wife were ordered to leave Versailles in half an hour, and were not permitted to speak to the queen or to the dauphin before their departure.

It was not until three years afterwards that the sentence of exile pronounced against *ces Messieurs*, as the king always called the enemies of Madame de Châteauroux, was partially removed.

There were great rejoicings all through France when the king recovered; the *Te Deum* was everywhere sung, the Parliament sent a deputation to Metz to congratulate his Majesty on his escape from the jaws of death; in Paris high and low illuminated, even one of the prisoners in the Bastille, and the king was accorded the popular title of Well-Beloved!

On the 13th November his Majesty entered Paris, and the streets would have been illuminated had not the winds and the rain put out the lights. On the next day Louis XV., accompanied by all the royal family, went to Notre Dame to return thanks to God. All the members of the Court, with the exception of the king and the queen, were in mourning for the sixth daughter of their majesties, who had died in September.

The festivities lasted for several days, the king and the queen appearing together constantly in public, and on the 17th the royal family returned to Versailles. Soon came bad news—reports that the Well-Beloved had dismissed some of his popular servants,

had ordered the Bishop of Soissons to return to his See, and had sent M. de Maurepas to make a kind of apology to the two duchesses for the manner in which they had been treated at Metz, asking them to return to Court, and assuring them of his friendship and protection. "This news," says Barbier, "infinitely disgusts the public. The Jansenists regard the step as terrible, and predict all kinds of misfortunes."

But before Louis XV. could return to his wicked ways the Duchesse de Châteauroux fell ill, and was bled several times. Then we read with astonishment that—"The queen sends once a day to know how the patient is, and the king several times. The princesses and all the Court came to the house of Madame de Lauraguais, where she is lying, to write down their names. She has received the sacraments and has confessed." And then—"No notice is taken of anything but the illness of Madame de Châteauroux; it is a malignant fever, much more obstinate than that of the king. She has been bled twice in the throat in the course of two days. This malady is a very singular one."—*Barbier*.

"8th Dec.—The Duchesse de Châteauroux died at 5 a.m., aged twenty-seven years." We are then told that her death was attributed to the grief she felt on being disgraced, and the sudden joy she experienced on being restored to favour. "It is to be observed, however, that before receiving the visit of M. de Maurepas, he had been warned by letter that she had made her conditions, among which she stipulated that

the Dukes of Bouillon, Villeroi, and La Rochefoucauld should be dismissed. . . . The king is terribly afflicted. . . . The people rejoice over this death, and would like to see the king take another mistress to-morrow.”
—*Barbier*.

And here for a while we must leave Louis and his concubines, and turn to the marriages of his eldest daughter and the dauphin.

CHAPTER X.

THE DUCHESS OF PARMA.

MADAME ELIZABETH, who was called at Court *Madame Première*, was then known as *Madame Infante*, and afterwards as the Duchess of Parma, was the only daughter of Louis XV. who married. Born in 1727, she was united, as we have already mentioned, to Don Philip of Spain in 1739.¹ By this match Spain obtained the moral and material support of France in her quarrel with England, while the sending back of the Infanta was partially atoned for; France merely the hope that one day—a day which never came—Don Philip and his wife would sit on the throne of Naples. According to D'Argenson, “the consequence of this *plat mariage*, as he calls it, was a bitter war (War of Succession) between England and Spain, in which we madly took part, which was commenced shortly after the nuptials, and was terminated only in 1748 by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.”

Fleury, says Henri Martin, refused at first to consent, and presented the king with a written protest

¹ Don Philip was the youngest son of Philip V. and Elizabeth Farnese.

against war; he urged the misery which reigned throughout the country, and the depopulation which it caused as arguments in favour of peace; but when he saw that the king was strongly influenced by his mistress, by his intimate friends, and by the letters of his daughter, the young Infanta, who had been trained by the Queen of Spain to demand *à grands cris* an appanage for her husband at the expense of Austria, Fleury yielded by degrees, and allowed the French plenipotentiary in Germany to transform his pacific mission into a mission of war and spoliation.

The marriage of *Madame Infante* cost an enormous amount. D'Argenson estimates the expense on fireworks and other displays at 800,000 francs; the Duc de Luynes at half that amount. The public were highly indignant at the vast sums of money thus squandered during a period of dearth, but did nothing but murmur. Cardinal Fleury appears to have been much struck with the quantity of lace, fine raiment, and linen presented by the king to his daughter—linen to the amount of 100,000 crowns, says the Duc de Luynes—and to have asked in joke if “the luxurious heap of *chiffons* was meant for the marriage of all his Majesty’s daughters?” “But, Sire,” said a lady of the Court, “when the dauphin is married, will your Majesty set fire to the four corners of Paris?” And the king replied—“*Ah! on verra bien autre chose!*”

When the day arrived for the Infanta to set out for Madrid, she remained all the morning closeted with the king and the queen, and many tears were

shed. The parting with her twin sister, Madame Henriette, was extremely affecting, especially as on both sides it was supposed that they would never meet again. The king, who was very pale, and displayed considerable emotion, got into the carriage with his daughter, and accompanied her as far as Plessis-Picquet, instructing her on the road how she should conduct herself at the Court of Madrid. At Plessis-Picquet the king and the Infanta alighted; his Majesty several times kissed his daughter, then stifling his sobs and hiding his tears, took the road back to Versailles.

At Bordeaux the reception given to the Infanta was magnificent; the good citizens no doubt considering this Spanish marriage as a pledge of peace. All along the road the ovations were splendid, and the youthful princess must have been enchanted with her journey to the frontier, which it took her six weeks to accomplish.

The welcome accorded to the Infanta was no less hearty at Madrid than elsewhere, and the youthful princess had not been installed a month in her new home before the Duc de Luynes wrote to say that the Court of Spain was very much pleased with her deportment and her face. But, alas! before six months had elapsed everything had changed, and Philip and his termagant wife were complaining "loudly and violently" of the French, and their old cardinal, especially the queen, who said that France had sent a *galeuse* to Madrid. D'Argenson apologizes

for this by saying that the princess was disposed to suffer from a cutaneous disease from her earliest infancy, and that the warm air and spiced food of Spain brought out the malady.

The Infanta soon became attached to Don Philip, who treated her with politeness and attention, who was affable and gentle, who spoke French perfectly, and who "played upon several instruments." But this state of bliss was not destined to last. War broke out in 1741, on the death of the Emperor Charles, and Don Philip was obliged to leave his wife shortly after she had been confined of a daughter, in order to place himself at the head of the Spanish troops acting in Italy. After several campaigns Milan opened its gates to the Spaniards, who were unable to hold the city, which with Alessandria, Casal, and other places, fell once more into the hands of the Austrians. The allied forces under Don Philip and Marshal de Maillebois suffered another desperate reverse at Placentia, and this so irritated the French Government that there was a question of recalling Maillebois and sending him to the scaffold. However, in a long report to the king he cleared his character. He showed that the battle was fought contrary to his advice, and it was admitted on all sides that the marshal had exhibited the greatest possible courage. Marshal Saxe said of him—"Maillebois never invented powder,¹ but he likes the smell of it."

The French Government, seeing the compromising

¹ Equivalent to "never set the Thames on fire."

state of affairs, redoubled its efforts to appease the King of Spain and his wife, and M. de Noailles was sent back to Madrid to try and induce them to desist from their claims on the Milanese in favour of Don Philip—claims which the recent reverses in Italy had rendered hopeless.

De Noailles has left a curious picture of the condition in which he found Philip V. "He is so changed," he wrote, "that I should hardly have recognized him had I seen him elsewhere than in his own palace. He has grown much more corpulent, and appears shorter, because he has great difficulty in holding himself upright, and in walking, for he takes no exercise. As regards his understanding he is not altered. He displays good sense, and when he takes the trouble to discuss business he replies quickly and correctly. He has forgotten nothing that he has either done, seen, or read, and has great pleasure in speaking of old times. . . His heart is truly French."

But when the ambassador ventured to touch upon the war with Italy and establishment for Don Philip, such as the present state of affairs would admit, the face of his Majesty glowed with resentment, and he inveighed against French ministers and French generals, and dwelt in terms of grief and disappointment on what the two crowns might have effected had they acted in concert. He complained of having been treated with disrespect, while on his side he had omitted nothing to gratify France. Had he not, at the solicitation of France, declared war against

England, relying upon a promise that she would send a fleet to American waters? After this how could he have expected what happened at the secret negotiations at Turin? And there can be no doubt of the fact that Philip V. was unfairly treated.

The French and Spanish forces were now obliged to fall back upon Genoa, and matters were in this unpleasant condition when the news of the death of his father reached Don Philip. That hypochondriacal monarch was succeeded on the throne by Ferdinand, his only remaining son by his first wife, Maria Louisa of Savoy. Fortunately for the Bourbons, the French armies were more successful in Flanders than in Italy, and the victories of Marshal Saxe enabled them to conclude peace at Aix-la-Chapelle, where among other arrangements Parma and Placentia were ceded to Don Philip. No less than 100,000 men, says Lacroix in his *History of France during the Eighteenth Century*, perished in order that Don Philip might reign over two or three hundred. Not that Don Philip, his wife, or his mother were satisfied with the results of a war which was certainly disastrous for France in spite of some brilliant victories.

At the outbreak of the war, that is in 1741, *Madame Infante*, fifteen years of age, gave birth to a daughter, Marie Elisabeth Louise Antoinette, as she was christened, and Dona Isabella, as she was afterwards called.¹ Shortly after this event Don Philip

¹ Dona Isabella married the Archduke, afterwards Emperor, Joseph II.

went to the wars, and was long separated from his youthful wife. During the absence of her lord and master we see that *Madame Infante* kept up "an intimate political correspondence" with her father, her letters being no doubt inspired by her mother-in-law, or by Madame des Ursins.

When the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed, sealed, and delivered, Don Philip set out for Chambery to take possession of his states, being followed by his wife, who came round by Versailles, where she remained for about a year. She wanted to travel in state, but money was scarce, and she had to put up with the king's carriages, escorted by twelve guards and two corporals; she was accompanied by M. de Sesmaisons, and was met at the frontier by the Comte de Noailles. Two days later she was followed by her daughter, "with a suite suitable to her age." D'Argenson, who liked not *Madame Infante*, bitterly remarks that her visit cost France 1,200,000 livres, adding, "This is a bit of paternal tenderness for which the French people, plunged in the deepest misery, have to pay dearly."

Madame Infante left Bayonne on the 13th December, and arrived on the 29th at Villeroy, where the king met her and took her to Choisy, where all the royal family had assembled. There was great delight, and the dauphin was so overcome with joy that he kissed every one, even the ladies in waiting. Balls, theatricals, and suppers rapidly succeeded each other at the royal residence; but France was exhausted, and "from

the extremities of the provinces, from town and hamlet, from every point of the kingdom came dull rumours ; the air was filled with cries, groans, imprecations, and threats ; a storm of anger swept through the ranks of the people, and roared round the foot of the throne. The people were suffering ; the people were hungry."

At the beginning of 1749 D'Argenson wrote—"It is said that the Infanta is going to remain for a long time, perhaps for years ; the reason given is that the palace at Parma is devoid of everything—no furniture, no staircases. Happy pretext formed by paternal affection for detaining this Infanta, who is much beloved, and for keeping her away from a husband who is not loved. Neither does the king like his son-in-law Don Philip, owing to the small amount of courage he had exhibited during the war in Italy. However, how must his conscience feel at this divorce between husband and wife, which has lasted for seven or eight years, during which time the Infant Don Philip has fallen into abominable vices. . . ."

What D'Argenson calls a "happy pretext" was founded on reality. In fact, when Philip's brother Charles left Parma in 1734 to reign at Naples, he carried away everything portable—doors, windows, and even the steps of a fine marble staircase, says the Duc de Luynes.

The Court of Spain is said to have been much annoyed with the Infanta for remaining so long away from her husband, as heirs male were required for

the Italian possessions of the House of Bourbon. She at last rejoined Don Philip, and after a separation which had lasted for eight years they lived together for a while.

After her return to Parma the Infanta gave birth to two more children—to Ferdinand Marie Philip Louis, who eventually succeeded his father, and to Louisa Maria Theresa, who in 1765 married Charles, Prince of Asturias, afterwards King of Spain.

The Infanta did not remain long absent from her native land. When her twin sister Madame Henriette died in 1752 she wrote a most touching letter to her father, expressing her desire to mingle her tears with those of the rest of the royal family. It is sad to relate that she had other and more material reasons for wishing to return to Versailles, and that her grief was but a pretext. Objections were raised in consequence of the expense which this visit would occasion, but after a good deal of delay permission was accorded, thanks to the intervention of the Comtesse de Toulouse, and Louis XV. sent the Chevalier de Crenay to Genoa with four galleys to fetch the Infanta. She landed at Antibes on the 6th September, and travelled to Paris by easy stages, escorted by twelve of the king's body-guard, commanded by an *exempt*.¹ On the 26th she arrived at Bourbon, where her father and sisters had gone to meet her, and the whole family having alighted from the carriages in the middle of the high-road, gave free

¹ A police officer.

course to their tears. An hour later they arrived at Fontainebleau. What the Infanta really desired was a more important sovereignty than that of Parma.

She neither took any part in the squabbles which so frequently broke out between the royal family and Madame de Pompadour, nor in the frivolous amusements of the Court. D'Argenson is forced to acknowledge that "she transacted much serious business; that she amused herself very little at the concerts and receptions of the queen; that she made her reverence, then shut herself up in her study, wrote for three or four hours, and sent for ministers to talk matters over with them." No doubt before leaving Madrid she had been well schooled by her termagant mother-in-law. However, she could obtain nothing—no additional territory in Italy, no Low Countries with the opulent towns of Brussels and Antwerp; which she was said to covet, and she had to return home once more.

She left Versailles on the 27th September, 1753, and in chronicling this event D'Argenson wrote—"It is to be hoped that the Infanta will never come back to France. Is it right that the State should suffer because she was badly married? With her go a large number of chariots laden with goods which the king has given her." And, in fact, she is said to have proved a sad burden on the tax-payers.

However, the Duchess of Parma did return to France—returned in 1757, looking the picture of health, and two years afterwards caught the small-pox,

died 6th December, 1759, and the same evening her remains were conveyed to St. Denis.

As soon as her decease was announced the king, the royal family, and Madame de Pompadour set out for Marly, where, as Barbier says, "the queen presided at table in the evening, and the king, who has his private apartments at Marly, had his private suppers as usual. However, every one looked sad."

We need say little more about the Infanta, Duchess of Parma, beyond this—she left papers behind which, when examined by the king, left no doubt on his mind that there had been a *liaison* between the deceased and the Abbé de Bernis. Now his Majesty had applied for a hat for the abbé, which he would fain have withheld; but it had arrived from Rome before the discovery was made, and Louis XV. felt obliged to bestow it. Madame du Hausset, in her *Memoirs*, says that the king flung it to him as one flings a bone to a dog.

The cardinal was removed from office on another plea, Barbier remarking that there was some mystery about the matter which he could not fathom.

Don Philip followed his wife to the grave after an interval of six years.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DAUPHIN.

WE have seen with what delight the birth of the dauphin was hailed, assuring as it did the direct succession to the throne—not that the dauphin himself was ever destined to reign. Until he was seven years of age he remained, like his father before him, under the tutelage of the Duchesse de Ventadour, and he afterwards had for governor the Duc de Châtillon, who was aided by the Counts de Muy and de Polastron, the Bishop de Mirepoix, the Abbé de St. Cyr, and M. de Marbœuf. The dauphin appears to have been intelligent, studious, and hot-tempered, one day boxing the ears of the Bishop de Mirepoix for having contradicted him. Suffice it to say, that the character of this prince was of a complex description. We find that while his favourite authors were Plato, Cicero, Tacitus, Lucretius, Horace, Virgil, and Juvenal, and while he delighted in the masterpieces of French literature, he was the bitter enemy of the philosophers who then flourished in France. He did all in his power as dauphin to combat their doctrines, and he never ceased to urge upon the king and the

Parliament the necessity of persecuting them. "What matters it to a philosopher," he often repeated, "to see his works burned at the foot of the grand staircase of the Palais de Justice, if he be allowed tranquilly to write another in his study more dangerous than the first?"

In addition to ancient and modern literature, the dauphin studied at an early age public and international law, physics, agriculture, &c., and he was by no means deficient in ready wit. When joked with not being able to stand quiet, and with always shuffling about with his feet, he answered, that the more he studied the Court the more he was convinced that it was well to know how to stand first on one leg and then on the other. That he was skilled in the art of dissimulation, and approved of the maxim of Louis XI.—"*Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare*"—there is little doubt. He said himself that a dauphin should employ one half of his intelligence in hiding the other half. That Louis XV. was soon displeased with the conduct of his son is certain. Whispering tongues, who no doubt poisoned truth, were quick to inform his Majesty that his profligacy was daily criticized by his son. The king, rightly or wrongly, conceived the idea that the dauphin was impatient to reign, and distrusting him, he determined to deprive him of all share in the government of the country as long as possible, and to get him a wife.

"Without desiring it," says D'Argenson, "the

queen has a party. The dauphin and *Mesdames* have all the confidence in her of badly brought-up children. More evil than good is spoken of the king at these interviews. They groan over his amours and abuse his mistress. . . The priests, the monks, and the bigots unite there. The jealousy of the queen and the bull *unigenitus* are the idols of this cabal."

To counterbalance the alliance of England, Austria, and Sardinia, the Bourbons renewed their family compact by the treaty of Fontainebleau, which was soon afterwards cemented by a marriage between the dauphin and the Infanta Maria Theresa. This marriage, which appears to have been negotiated by M. de Vaureal, Bishop of Rennes, without any difficulty, gave great satisfaction in Spain, as it soothed Spanish pride, being considered as an *amende honorable* for the sending back of the Infanta Maria Anna Victoria, who was to have wedded Louis XV. Now the younger sister of the ill-treated Maria Anna Victoria was given in marriage to the son of Louis XV., and the gown was washed white. By the Fontainebleau arrangement France and Spain mutually guaranteed their actual possessions, with all their rights and acquisitions present or future, and promised never to lay down their arms nor open negotiations except by common assent. The King of France guaranteed to Don Carlos the possession of Naples and Sicily, and engaged to assist in procuring the Milanese with the duchies of Parma and

Placentia for Don Philip, on condition that the Queen of Spain should enjoy the two last duchies during her lifetime as her family inheritance. He was to renew hostilities against the King of Sardinia in conjunction with Spain, to declare war against England, to assist in recovering the isle of Minorca, and never to conclude peace without the restoration of Gibraltar. All this must have been very sweet to the hypochondriacal Philip and his termagant wife, who had long struggled with such violence to settle her children well in life.

Barbier thus announced the coming of the dauphiness, whose arrival was looked forward to with the most lively curiosity—

“February.—The dauphiness is approaching. She is said to be very intelligent; she knows several languages, and has received an education superior to her sex. She is nineteen years old, and consequently of an age to think and to speak; she is proud with dignity. It is said that the Duchesse de Brancas, her lady of honour, wished her to rouge herself, such being the custom in France, and because it would become her. She replied that if the king, the queen, and the dauphin ordered her she would employ rouge, but not otherwise.

“The Duc de Richelieu has been sent to Orleans to compliment the dauphiness on the part of the king, the queen, and the dauphin; he took with him a permission to employ rouge, which was applied the same day. Otherwise the dauphiness would have

appeared too pale to the dauphin, whose eyes are accustomed to rouge.”¹

The marriage took place, and was celebrated with a magnificence worthy of the occasion, and far surpassing that displayed when *Madame Infante* gave her hand to Don Philip. In fact, such vast sums of money were spent in festivities that the king was obliged to have recourse to tontines to replenish the royal treasury.

Being married, although he had no children, no son to replace him in the event of his death, the dauphin was allowed to take the field with his father in 1745, and was present at Fontenoy. He sent a long account of that battle to his wife, and a shorter one to his mother, which ran thus—

“MY DEAR MOTHER,

“I cannot express the joy with which the victory of Fontenoy fills me—victory just gained by the king. He showed himself a true king all through, but especially when the victory inclined to neither one side nor the other; for then, without allowing himself to be influenced by the anxiety he witnessed in all around, he himself gave the wisest orders with a presence of mind and a firmness which none could help admiring. Our joy was all the more lively, as our alarm had been great. The enemy withdrew to a great distance in disorder,² and there is a great deal of ill-feeling among them. It is the work of the hand of God, to whom alone the victory is due, *and I think that your prayers have much contributed towards it.*³ The king returned to his quarters in

¹ A note mentions that the quantity of rouge employed at this epoch was shocking. Taine relates that little girls of six years old were dressed like women, at this epoch, and rouged.

² This was not the case according to Marshal Saxe.

³ The words in italics were effaced by the queen.

perfect health. As for me, I was rather tired yesterday, as I was on horseback for thirteen hours, and remained until 6 p.m. without taking anything ; but the night has restored me. I beg a million pardons for having been so long without writing. It was not that I did not wish to write sooner, but I thought that you would prefer receiving at the same time the news of a battle gained, and that the king and myself are in good health, than one saying that we were in presence of the enemy, and that we expected each moment to be attacked. This is why I preferred doing violence to my feelings, and depriving myself of a pleasure, rather than sending you news capable of rendering you uneasy. Adieu, my dear mamma! I implore you not to forget the most tender and most respectful of sons.

“ LOUIS.

“ THE CAMP BEFORE TOURNAY, 12th May, 1745.”

The queen, who also received a few indifferent lines from the king, sent her reply to the dauphin's letter to the Comte d'Argenson, with the following touching expressions, which evidently came from the bottom of her heart—

“ I send you a letter for my son. What do you think of him at present? And when with very little modesty I told you that he was charming, was I wrong? You know me also. You will not be surprised by the sentiments I express. I feel more flattered at being the wife of the king and the mother of my son than being queen. Never say a word of this ; *but I love the first to madness.*”

According to Barbier—

“ The Household troops performed miracles, and are said to have determined the victory. We have lost a large number of gallant officers. The Duc de Gramont was killed by a cannon-ball. The king's regiment suffered severely. A great number of officers belonging to the guards were killed during the rout of their regiment, which they tried to reform ; for the French guard gave way and took to its heels,

with the exception of the 4th battalion. It is said that the king is very angry with this regiment, which has been rendered cowardly by its continual residence in Paris !”

In a letter written to Comte d’Argenson, and dated Paris, 25th February, 1750, Marshal Saxe, after quoting numerous instances in which French troops not fighting under cover had given way, said—“I doubt if there are many of our generals who would undertake to cross a plain with infantry in presence of a strong force of cavalry, and flatter themselves that they would be able to hold their own for several hours with fifteen to twenty battalions in the midst of an army, as the English did at Fontenoy, without any cavalry charge having been able to break them, or cause them to fire wildly. These are things which we have all seen, but self-love forbids us to speak of them, because it is well known that we are incapable of imitating them.”

The king and the dauphin returned.

“Tuesday, 19th July.—The dauphiness has been confined of a daughter. On the morning of the 22nd an order arrived from Versailles to say prayers of forty hours for the dauphiness, who is very ill. The Holy Sacrament has been exposed at Notre Dame, . . . but this ceremony did not last long ; the Holy Sacrament was withdrawn, and new orders were sent to the various parishes, the news having spread abroad that the princess was dead. What strange events for the king, one after the other, and this one concerns the

State. The dauphin is of full habit; he loved his wife, and her loss may injure his health. Besides, he will not be able to marry again for some time, and we stand in great need of princes. The Court, which is at Versailles, is plunged in the deepest *désolation*, for the princess was beloved by all. They swear much against the doctors, as usual, without thinking that these human events are in the hands of destiny."

The eyes of the dauphiness were hardly closed when, with indecent haste, it became a question of finding a second wife for the inconsolable dauphin. The king talked over the matter with his ministers, and it was at first proposed to demand the hand of the Infanta Antonia, sister of the deceased princess. The Pope, it was urged, would readily grant a dispensation, seeing the importance that such an alliance would be to the Catholic world. Both the Duc de Noailles and M. de Maurepas were in favour of this match, which was opposed by the other ministers as entirely contrary to French customs, and to this view the king inclined. However, the French courtiers who were in the pay of Spain wrote to Madrid, saying that, with a little persuasion and threatening, they would overcome the scruples of the king. The Bishop of Rennes having been won over with the promise of a cardinal's hat, urged the policy of this union in the most vehement language, and declared to D'Argenson that unless the marriage took place the Spaniards would feel even more insulted than when the Infanta was sent back to Madrid in 1724. The dauphin and

the queen were next persuaded that the Infanta Antonia would be the most fit and proper person to replace her deceased sister. But the king determined to follow the advice of D'Argenson, then Foreign Minister, and this nipped the Court intrigue in the bud. D'Argenson declared that the proposed marriage would be incestuous, in spite of the dispensation of "the keys," and this declaration appears to have had great weight with his Most Christian Majesty, who desired to avoid a scandal. Having come to a decision, Louis XV. wrote to D'Argenson—

"CHOISY, 27th September, 1746.

"When I received your packet I was working at the enclosed draft of a reply; consult your brother as to the military portion, and let me know what you both think. It is not quite in conformity with your views, but we must not 'sabre' the King of Spain."

In this draft Louis XV. said that he was no theologian, but that marriages with a deceased wife's sister were looked upon as unlucky in France, and were highly disapproved of; he hoped that the King of Spain would take into consideration the difficulty and the delicacy of his situation, . . . and not join the English, who are the greatest enemies of our house. Then his Majesty went into some details concerning Mallebois and the campaign in Italy, where things had been going badly.

On the 2nd October Louis XV. sent another note to D'Argenson, which ran thus—

"Here is my rough sketch of a letter to the King

of Spain; we must finish the affair, and strike a decisive blow (*asséner le coup de pistolet*). Let me know what you think of this, and act accordingly. Send it back as soon as possible, so that the departure of the courier may not be delayed."

Louis XV., after fresh assurances of friendship, regret, &c., &c., announced his intention of marrying the dauphin with the Princess of Saxony.

After recounting the above details, D'Argenson points out that these alliances between sovereigns have only a temporary effect, which policy soon brushes away in case of necessity. Louis XIV., he points out, waged war with his father-in-law, the King of Spain, shortly after his marriage; King William would not have dethroned James II. had he not been his son-in-law. . .

The marriage of Marie Josephe de Saxe was the work of D'Argenson, and he bitterly informs us that on the very day the nuptials were celebrated at Dresden he received his *congé*. Once out of office, he resumed his journal.

Whatever may have been thought of the morality of a marriage between the dauphin and the sister of his deceased wife, such a union ought to have had nothing objectionable about it for the monarch who had had four or five of the De Nesles for his mistresses.

The mother of the last three Bourbon kings who reigned in France deserves some notice at our hands. Marie Josephe de Saxe, daughter of Frederick

Augustus and of the daughter of the Emperor Joseph I., was born at Dresden on the 4th November, 1731, and her education was still unfinished when her hand was demanded for the dauphin. We are assured that she had little idea of the brilliant match in store for her, although, when quite a child, she had dreamed that, having embarked on board of a vessel called "Hope," and having cast a net, she brought up a dolphin, or dauphin. Again, it seemed highly improbable that the King of France should seek an alliance with the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, who had dethroned his father-in-law, Stanislas Leczinski. The Court of Versailles disapproved of the alliance, but Marshal Saxe, who had become a power in the State, and who was the uncle of Marie Josephe, was bent upon the match, and he is said to have carried his point with as much skill as he beat the Germans.

After the usual formalities the princess set out for Strasbourg, which city she entered on the 29th January. She is represented as "of a height proportioned to her age, perfectly well made, of noble deportment, a gentle and winning air, walking well and with grace; she grows rapidly, is fair, has large expressive blue eyes, and an intelligent countenance. It cannot be said that she is handsome, but she may be regarded as pretty and pleasing; she has a great deal of the best kind of *esprit*, penetration, uprightness, and an excellent temper; she is pious, and has received the best possible education." Such was the

description given by the French ambassador at Dresden.

From Strasbourg the new dauphiness journeyed to Troyes, and it was there that she learned how deeply the dauphin regretted his first wife, with what aversion he regarded his coming marriage, and that he had written in a letter—"No matter what her charms, she will never make me forget her whom I have lost." Marie Josephe retired to her room to weep, but on reaching Versailles she had the good sense and the fortitude to conceal her emotion, and in a very short time she conquered the good graces of the king, the queen, and of all the royal family. During a certain ceremony, in strict accordance with etiquette, she ought to have worn a bracelet with the portrait of her father. This she thought might offend the queen. Her Majesty in the course of the evening turned to her daughter-in-law and said—"Ah! that is the portrait of the king, your father." To this she replied—"See what a good likeness it is, my mother." It was that of Stanislas Leczinski.

On the 9th February the marriage was celebrated at Versailles, and the ceremonies were pronounced by Marshal Saxe to have been "terrible!" In his letters he gives numerous details of "the sacrifice of this princess." The marshal could not make out how she managed to endure such fatigue; he told the king that unless she were allowed to take some repose she would fall ill. He was quite knocked up himself. "The heat in the apartments in the evening, owing to

the number of people and the wax lights, was enough to kill one," he said. " Added to that her dresses were so heavy that I do not know how she managed to wear them. What was more fatiguing still was the number of presentations without end ; and she did what she could to remember the names, which was a terrible mental work. . . The other day the king made me feel the weight of her skirt, which was on a sofa while she was at her toilette ; it weighed quite sixty pounds. None of our breast-plates weigh so much. How she was able to remain on her feet for eight or nine hours with this enormous weight, I know not."

The description given of the nuptial night of the royal pair is not without interest, as regards the etiquette which was observed. When they had been put to bed by the persons of their household, the curtains were closed, and all the Court entered the chamber. Then the curtains were opened, and the king, queen, princes, princesses, and more than a hundred ladies covered with precious stones and fine raiment, proved their presence in the bed. The brilliancy and profusion of these lights rendered this ceremonial all the more striking. At the sight of such a number of witnesses the dauphin, we are told, was seized with terror, and hid his face under the clothes ; but Marie Josephe never ceased chatting with Marshal Saxe, paying no attention to the other persons in the room.

According to the marshal, who made the match, the spectators left the chamber painfully impressed,

because "it looked like a sacrifice, and because the dauphiness had found means to interest every one."

The second night appears to have been more painful still for Marie Josephe, for "the dauphin and the dauphiness found themselves for the first time in the room of the late dauphiness. At the sight of the cradle of his little daughter, and of the bed in which his first wife had breathed her last, the dauphin, overcome by emotion, turned away his head and wept. Upon this the princess, with much delicacy, said, "Give free course to your tears, sir, and do not fear to offend me; they are a presage, on the contrary, of what I may hope for myself should I be happy enough to merit your esteem."

On the occasion of this marriage of the dauphin with a Saxon princess, an anonymous poet sent the following verse to Marshal Saxe—

"L'Envie est sous tes pieds, la gloire sur ton front.
Que tes destins sont beaux, invincible Saxon !
Louis choisit ton sang pour puiser dans sa source
Un germe de héros pour régner après lui,
Et nos derniers neveux se diront en leur course :
Son sang nous fit des rois, son bras fut leur appui."

And it seems to have been fondly hoped that the Bourbon blood would be regenerated, and that the children of the dauphin and his Saxon wife would inherit some of the spirit of the old marshal and of his father Augustus, "the physically strong."

Barbier informs us that—

"The people were anything but pleased with the

fêtes given by the municipal authorities of Paris, which were regarded as mean, considering the occasion. We read of five cars painted and gilded parading the city from morning till night. In the first car was the god Mars and his warriors; the second was filled with musicians; the third represented a ship, the arms of Paris; the fourth, Bacchus seated on a barrel; the fifth, the goddess Ceres. Each car was drawn by eight horses, and at certain places heaps of sausages, bread, biscuits, and oranges were thrown to the people. There were also barrels of wine for the public to drink. The general displeasure, as usual, found vent in song, and on the evening of the nuptial ceremony appeared the following couplets—

‘Monsieur le prévôt des marchands,
Ma foi vous vous moquez des gens.
Votre Cérès, au teint livide
Garde pour elle ses gâteaux;
Bacchus n’a que des tonneaux vides.
Mars mutilé tombe en morceaux.’

“And, in fact, owing to the jolting of the car, the head of Mars fell from his shoulders.

‘Le peuple, animal ignorant,
N’aperçoit ici que clinquant:
Moi, j’admire votre sagesse.
Cet or, que paraît faux à tous
En dépit d’eux, par votre adresse,
Devient un or très-pur pour vous.’”

In fact, the lord mayor was accused of having treated the people to tinsel, and of having put real gold in his pocket.

Next year *Madame*, not quite two years of age, died, to the great grief of the dauphin. We find this event thus chronicled by Barbier—

“June.—Madame, daughter of the dauphin and his first wife, died on the 28th of this month at Versailles, it is said of convulsions while teething, which was mistaken for another ‘accident.’ She was transported to the palace of the Tuileries on the 30th, and thence to St. Denis, with a magnificent *cortége*. The heart was afterwards conveyed to Val de Grace. The funeral was much finer than that of the dauphiness (her mother), apparently to satisfy Spain. There are neither prayers nor mourning at that age (twenty months).”

And thus perished all trace of that marriage, which effaced the insult of 1725—mother and child both dead and gone!

In the month of January the dauphiness had a second miscarriage, which caused considerable uneasiness to the king and Court, it being greatly feared that no princes would be born. There was, however, no reason for this gloomy prognostication, as the future showed. In August, 1750, preparations were made in Paris to celebrate the confinement of the dauphiness, and it was arranged to have fireworks on the river in the event of a prince being born. Barbier tells us that—

“Wednesday 26th, 6 a.m., the dauphiness began to feel serious pains. A number of couriers were despatched from Versailles, on the part of the Court,

one for the city, and orders were given to throw sand along the quay from the Pont Neuf to the Hôtel de Ville, so that the courier, bringing the news of the confinement, and riding fast, should not break his neck. There was another courier for Notre Dame, to have the Holy Sacraments exposed, and one for the Parliament."

All the princes, princesses, ministers, ambassadors, gentlemen of the Court, of the sword, of the gown, and of the Church were at Versailles awaiting the event. Expectation was on tip-toe until 6 p.m., when the dauphiness was confined of a daughter only, to the great disappointment of every one. The couriers were despatched, the guns of the *Invalides* fired, but there was neither "joy nor pleasure in Paris."

"The dauphiness perceived by the looks of those present," says Barbier, "that it was a princess, but that made no impression upon her. The king while she was in labour is said to have held one hand and the queen the other. When Jarre told the king that it was a princess he became white. The princess could not long ignore the sex of the child, because, according to rule, it was presented to her shortly after being born so that she might kiss it. When a prince is born he is decorated with the blue ribbon,¹ and he is presented by one of the gentlemen of the Court; when it is a princess she is presented by a lady of the Court. The mother, the child, and the nurse are well, and this safe

¹ Order of the St. Esprit.

confinement gives hope that we shall have a prince next."

In September, Barbier says that the young princess had her fourth nurse, and that this change of milk was not advantageous. He adds—"I learned on this occasion that everything is done according to form at the Court, following a protocol of the doctors, so that it is quite a miracle for a prince or princess to be reared. The nurse has no other functions than to give the breast to the child, who is brought to her, she may not touch it. There are stirers (*remueuses*), women for that purpose who receive no orders from the nurse. There are certain hours for turning a child over, three or four times a day. When the clock strikes, if the infant be asleep they awake it to turn it over. If after having been changed *il fait dans ses langes, il reste trois ou quatre heures ainsi dans son ordure*. Should a pin prick the child the nurse cannot remove it, it is necessary to look for and wait for another woman. The infant cries in both cases, worries itself, and gets feverish, so that all these ceremonies are pitiable."

Next year Barbier was able to announce—

"September 13th.—Great joy at Versailles, and great news in Paris. The dauphiness has been confined of a prince, Duke of Burgundy. The guns of the Invalides, the Bastille, and the city announced this news at three o'clock in the morning, awaking a great many people. This event was not expected so soon. There were no preliminary pains. The king had gone

to sup at Trianon with his favourites, and the queen after supping with Madame de Luynes had gone to bed. The princes, princesses, and ministers, who were all at Versailles, had either retired to rest or were in their apartments quite tranquilly. When the dauphiness was taken with pains they did not last five minutes; there was no one in the apartment but the dauphin in his dressing-gown, the Duchesse de Brancas, the nurse of the dauphin, and a few women. M. Jarre, the *accoucheur*, was in bed in the apartment. The first thing was to call him; that did not take long, but the dauphiness was confined without aid. M. Jarre, in dressing-gown and slippers, came just in time to receive the child.

“Ordinarily at such a confinement the princes and princesses of the blood, the Chancellor and the ministers, and also the Vidames of Amiens and of Chartres, ought to be present in order to act as witnesses, and to draw up a report; but there was no one. The dauphin had the presence of mind to call out, and to usher in the Body Guard, the Swiss, and every one at hand, to be witnesses, and to see the Duke of Burgundy. *Il les a fait entres en culotte seulement.* (No time, we suppose, for getting anything but their breeches.)

“A messenger was sent to the Trianon, where the king had just risen from table. He was a Swiss, who could hardly make the hall porter understand that he wished to speak to his Majesty on behalf of the dauphin. It was with difficulty that he gained admittance, and announced to the king the birth of

the Duke of Burgundy. Every one was both surprised and delighted. The king had no carriage, and was obliged to take that of the Prince de Conti. Some of the nobles got up behind, others ran on foot to Versailles. During this time the queen had been called up, and the princes, princesses, and ministers warned; so that in half an hour every one was in the apartment of the dauphiness.

“The report was signed by the Body Guards, Swiss, &c. The birth of the prince was not the less solemn, and there was no suspicion of a supposititious child.

“At Paris the tocsin of the city and that of the palace began to ring at dawn, and rang for three days and three nights. The sound of these tocsins is very lugubrious; they ring out indifferently for all great events, in joy or sorrow; for the birth of a dauphin and ‘children of France’; for the death of kings and queens, and in cases of general conflagration or sedition.” The people struck off work, by order of the police the shops were closed, houses were illuminated, money was thrown to the crowd, and many persons were injured. The preparations would have been on a more magnificent scale had not the Comte d’Argenson feared incurring needless expense, and that the dauphiness might give birth to another princess.

Three couriers arrived in Paris one after the other in the course of the morning. The first, a page in the service of the dauphiness, who brought news that the princess was in labour, received a handsome gold snuff-

box; the second, a gentleman of the Duc de Gévres (Governor of Paris), who brought news of the confinement, received a snuff-box and a pension of 1500 livres. The third, M. de Sommery, an ensign of the Body Guard, who came on the part of the king, had a gold snuff-box set in diamonds.

On Sunday the 19th there was a grand Te Deum at Notre Dame, with cymbals, trumpets, and violins. The king and queen, and all the princes and princesses of the blood were present, the ministers, &c., &c. There were no less than twenty bishops present, and the Cardinal de Soubise. The Parliament and all the other great bodies of the State were duly represented. The *cortége* was magnificent. There were eighteen carriages from the royal stables, nearly all drawn by eight horses. The dauphin sat in the same carriage as the king, and two officers of the Body Guard, who stood on the steps, scattered silver and even gold among the people. There was a good deal of tumult, but it was remarked that there were no cries of *Vive le roi!* although the officers were heard telling the people to shout. The fact is, that the price of bread had just risen. There were *circenses*, theatres thrown open to the public, &c.; but not *panem* sufficiently cheap.

“The king,” says Barbier, “looked sad and serious, for he liked not grand ceremonies, and was perhaps not well satisfied with his people.” Let us note this fact to his credit. The city wished to spend 400,000 livres on rejoicings, and laid plans before his Majesty.

The king preferred that 600 young women should be married in Paris, each being given a dowry of £20, also a gold medal with the effigy of his Majesty on one side, and the arms of the city on the other, and in addition a *louis* for the wedding breakfast.

“November.—The ceremony of the 600 marriages has been put off until the 9th. The curés of Paris charged with the execution had some trouble in finding bachelors, natives of Paris having a trade. Then the city required ready money. The city first of all sent to each curé cloth for the clothes of the bachelors, and coloured dresses for the spinsters. . .

“Each couple had only 369 livres, as divers expenses had to be deducted—for the marriage feast, for carriages, clothes, shoes, stockings, hats, bonnets, gloves, bouquets, &c.

“Tuesday 9th—day destined for this new and authentic ceremony, the cannon of the city opened fire at 6 a.m. In the morning the marriages began, each curé doing his best. There were sixty-six marriages at St. Sulpice, fifty at St. Paul’s . . .”

Everything is said to have gone off “with decency and dignity;” the curés kept good order, and added money of their own “to do things well.” Everything was terminated at 6 p.m., and the married couples were taken home.

“20th November.—The dauphin and the dauphiness came to hear mass at Notre Dame, and to thank God for the birth of a son, with a *cortége* of eight carriages drawn by eight horses each. . .”

Two things deserve notice, the royal *cortége* went out of its way so as not to pass by the Petit-Châtelet, or debtors' prison; for had it passed in front of that prison it would have been necessary to have set the debtors free. The prisoners no doubt expected their liberty, for we find in the *Mercur de France* that they illuminated the building in which they were confined for four days running in honour of the birth of the Duke of Burgundy, and placed an orchestra on the platform on the day of the visit to Notre Dame. The second noticeable event was that the people remained quiet, but shouted neither *Vive le roi!* nor *Vive le dauphin!* "being discontented with the price of bread and with taxes."

Madame de Pompadour, who was favourite when the Duke of Burgundy was born, shared the general delight, and warmly expressed her feelings on the subject in a letter written to Mademoiselle de Lutzelburg.

On the 17th February, 1752, Barbier announced the death of Madame Henriette from a *humeur de gale*, which she had when she was born. It will be remembered that after her twin sister Elizabeth had married Don Philip, the Spanish Court complained that France had sent it a *galeuse*. "On the 9th the princess was bled, after a great consultation, and the shrine of St. Geneviève was uncovered, but the next day she died. An order was at once given for all the theatres to be closed. This death will greatly affect the king, and at the same time the public in general. It is even forbidden to show wild animals at the

fair . . . Desolation reigns at Versailles ; the king at once went to Trianon, whither he was followed by all the royal family. Madame de Pompadour went there also, after having asked for permission. . . .

“ August.—Very sad event. On the 1st the dauphin was attacked with a great headache and fever. On the 2nd he was bled twice. On the 3rd the king returned post-haste from Compiègne, and at 3 p.m. the dauphin was bled in the foot. The doctors suspected the small-pox. On the 5th the queen arrived at 5 a.m., and the dauphin was again bled in the foot. At noon the small-pox made its appearance. Prayers of forty hours were commenced at Notre Dame. The dauphiness will not leave her husband, and is shut up with him. They will not allow the king to see the dauphin, but he remains at Versailles. The archbishop has been to Versailles several times to see the dauphin, who has confidence in him, having sent for him. . . . The city has four couriers, who ride night and day to Versailles and back. . . . Independently of the love of the French for their princes, particular interest is felt in this ‘head’ owing to the situation. The king has no other male children ; the Duke of Burgundy is not a year old ; in the event of anything happening to the king there would be a regency, which generally brings trouble. . . .”

However, the dauphin recovered, and the queen in her joy kissed Dr. Dumoulin, “ who though very old is gay and full of wit, and exclaimed, ‘ Gentlemen, I beg you to bear witness that her Majesty took me by

force.' . . . Every one is charmed with the dauphiness, who has not left her husband for an instant. The dauphin would take neither broth nor anything else except from her hand. . . ."

In 1753 another son was born, and Barbier says—

"September.—From the 1st the king will not sleep away from Versailles, nor go to any distance, until after the confinement of the dauphiness, in order to avoid what happened on the birth of the Duke of Burgundy.

"8th September.—The dauphiness was confined this afternoon of a son, to the great delight of the king, the Court, and all the kingdom, with the exception of the Jansenists, who the next day spread the report that the prince was dead. . . . The king has given this prince the name of Duc d'Aquitaine, a title ancient in French history, but which had not appeared for several centuries. . . ." ¹

The poor little duke did not live more than six months; he died in teething. He was given a magnificent funeral, and his heart was conveyed to Val de Grâce with a large escort.

Other children followed in rapid succession, and there now seemed very little chance of the eldest branch of the House of Bourbon becoming extinct,

¹ Aquitaine was united to France when Louis VII. married the daughter of the Duc de Guyenne. When Louis divorced his wife she married Henri II. of England, with Aquitaine for her dowry, and the title of Duke of Aquitaine remained in our royal family until the middle of the 15th century.

as had been feared more than once. D'Argenson tells us that on the—

“24th August.—The dauphiness was confined yesterday morning of a prince (afterwards Louis XVI.). *Voilà une brave Allemande*, who gives us lots of heirs to the throne.”

Then—

“17th November, 1755.—Last night the dauphiness was confined of a prince, who was named the Comte de Provence (afterwards Louis XVIII.). This excellent princess gives us as many supports to our throne as we could wish for. . . .”

The dauphiness was very ill after this confinement. “She would be a great loss,” remarked D'Argenson on the 22nd November, “because the dauphin, who is a bigot, would take a third wife, and that would cost the State a large sum.” However, the dauphiness recovered, and in October, 1756, had a miscarriage on learning that the King of Prussia had attacked her father—that his Polish Majesty and his army were blockaded in Pirna, from whence they eventually escaped upon very dismal terms. Barbier thus notices this event—

“The dauphiness has been so much affected by the misfortunes of Saxony and the treatment which the Queen of Poland has suffered that she has had a miscarriage. The Prussian ambassador has been told not to appear at Court, seeing the condition of the dauphiness. . . .”

We now come to the attempt on the life of Louis

XV. by Damiens, concerning which we must say a few words. In Barbier we find that—

“The fatal news spread quickly through the *salons* of Versailles. The queen, the dauphin, and all the royal family hurried in tears into the king’s chamber. His Majesty displayed the greatest presence of mind and courage; he addressed some touching words to the queen and to the dauphin on the misfortune which had befallen him. He appointed the dauphin Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, and directed that his orders should be taken on all matters. The king asked for a confessor. Father Desmaretz, Jesuit, his ordinary confessor, was not at Versailles, and so his Majesty confessed to a priest attached to the royal kitchen. . . . In the pocket of the assassin 30 louis, a few crowns, and an Old or a New Testament richly bound, were found. . . . An officer attached to the household of the dauphiness informed me in the evening that Dr. Hévin had assured him that there was no danger, and that had it been a private person he would have allowed him to go about his ordinary occupations on Friday (two days after his Majesty was stabbed).”

The excitement over the Damiens attempt had hardly subsided when another prince was born.

“9th October.—At 5 p.m. the dauphiness was quite well, and there was no question of anything happening. I had this from a person who arrived from Versailles at 7 o’clock. At 8 o’clock the bells were rung at Notre Dame for prayers of forty hours,

a courier having arrived to announce the first pains. Half an hour afterwards came a second courier, who brought word that the dauphiness had been safely confined of a prince. . . ." The king has given the new prince the name of the Comte d'Artois, to console that province for having given birth to that monster Damiens, and thus to insure for it the protection of the king. "It can be said that the succession to the throne is well secured; but it must be added that this number of four living princes is a great expense for the State, as regards the present and the future." The future! What a future, could Barbier only have seen it.

The Comte d'Artois was not the last child. We read again in Barbier—

"October.—The dauphiness was confined of a daughter on the 23rd September, without any preliminary pains. There was no one in the room at the time, and the confinement was known by hardly anything but the cries of the infant. This news when it reached Paris caused no emotion; there was no *Te Deum* or rejoicing of any sort. That is not astonishing for a girl who has four brothers living."

Thus unobtrusively did the little Marie Adélaïde Clotilde Xavière, who was afterwards nicknamed the *grosse Madame*, make her entrance into the world. We shall find her in 1775 marrying Charles Emmanuel Ferdinand, King of Sardinia. As for rejoicing, the state to which France had been reduced prevented that. We read that in November the king, Madame

de Pompadour, the Duc de Choiseul, Marshal Belleisle, and a crowd of nobles sent their plate to the mint, and how there was a great *concours de carosse* in front of the china and porcelain shops, where less costly dinner-services were purchased.

In March, 1761, the Duke of Burgundy, the eldest son of the dauphin, and heir-apparent to the throne, died, leaving behind him three brothers. According to Barbier—

“This unfortunate young prince had long been given up by the doctors, who pronounced that he was suffering from a scorbutic disease, and in 1759 wished to cut off one of his legs. When his body was opened no trace of scurvy was found. The deceased was buried with the pomp and circumstance usual on similar occasions, in spite of the expense which the funeral entailed.”

Four years later the little Duke of Burgundy was followed to the grave by his father, the dauphin, and eighteen months afterwards the dauphiness also died. The dauphin, after having been exceedingly obese, suddenly began to lose flesh, fell into a rapid decline, and breathed his last in December, 1765, in his thirty-seventh year. What sort of a king would he have made? Would he have been able to ward off the storm which was brewing, and which was destined to sweep away his children? He inspired great hopes, probably owing to the manifold sins of his father. His virtues were proclaimed by all parties when he died, so prone are people to praise the dead

at the expense of the living. Horace Walpole, who was in Paris at this time, mentioned the illness and the death of the dauphin in several of his letters.

HORACE WALPOLE TO CONWAY.

“PARIS, Oct. 28, 1765.

“ . . . The dauphin will probably hold out very few days. His death, that is the near prospect of it, fills the *philosophers* with the greatest joy, as it was feared he would endeavour the restoration of the Jesuits. You will think the sentiments of the *philosophers* very odd *State news*; but do you know who the *philosophers* are, or what the term means here? In the first place it comprehends almost everybody; and in the next means men who, avowing war against popery, aim, many of them, at a subversion of all religion, and still many more at the destruction of the regal power. . . .”

HORACE WALPOLE TO THE COUNTESS OF SUFFOLK.

“PARIS, Dec. 5, 1765.

“ . . . The dauphin is still alive, but kept so only by cordials. Yet the queen and the dauphiness have no doubt of his recovery, having the Bishop of Glandeve's word for it, who got a promise from a vision under his own hand and seal. The dauphin has certainly behaved with great courage and tranquillity, but he is so touched with the tenderness and attention of his family that he now expresses a wish to live. . . .”

In his next published letter, addressed to Lady Harvey, 2nd January, 1766, Horace Walpole says—
“The theatres are shut up for the dauphin's death, who, I believe, is the greatest loss they have had since Henri IV.”

HORACE WALPOLE TO SIR HORACE MANN.

“PARIS, 29th Feb., 1766.

“ . . . Yesterday we had the funeral oration on the dauphin, and are soon to have one on Stanislaus. It is a noble subject, but if I had leisure I would compose a grand funeral oration on the

number of princes dead within these six months. What fine pictures, contrasts, and comparisons they would furnish! The Duke of Parma and the King of Denmark reigning virtuously with absolute power. The emperor at the head of Europe, and encompassed with mimic Roman eagles, tied to the apron-strings of a bigoted and jealous virago. The dauphin cultivating virtues under the shade of so bright a crown, and shining only at the moment that he was snatched from the prospect of empire. . . . The public again thinks itself on the eve of war by the recall of Stahremberg, the Imperial minister. It seems at least to destroy the expectation of a match between the youngest archduchess and the dauphin, which it was thought Stahremberg remained here to bring about. . . .”

The clerical party to which he had always belonged naturally lamented him; they gave out that his death had been caused by the violence of his grief over the banishment of the Jesuits. He himself had declared that if called to the throne, and ordered by the Church to descend, he would obey. Would such a monarch have suited France during the dawn of philosophy? But, strange to say, the dauphin was regretted by the philosophers as well as by the Jesuits. Voltaire wrote the following distich under his portrait—

“Connu par ses vertus plus que par ses travaux
Il sut penser en sage et mourut en héros;”

and La Harpe claimed him for his party, because when he died a copy of Locke was found under his pillow, and because he had said, “Let there be no persecution.”¹

Bachaumont relates the following anecdote, certainly creditable to the deceased prince. He says—

¹ The device of Voltaire, Diderot, D’Alembert, and the other philosophers was—*Écrasons l’infâme*, that is to say, intolerance.

“12th July, 1762.—I cannot refrain from quoting a good, or rather a grand *mot* uttered by the dauphin. While he was in his bath they were reading to him the Gazette of Holland, which announced the proscripti^on of a book called *Education*. ‘That is well done,’ said the dauphin; ‘that book attacks religion, troubles society, and produces disorder; it can serve only to make men unhappy.’ There was also the *Contrat Social*, which was considered dangerous, observed the reader. ‘That,’ replied the prince, ‘is quite different; it merely attacks the authority of sovereigns, which is a matter open to discussion. There is much to be said about that; it is susceptible of controversy.’”

It was the fashion afterwards to ejaculate whenever any calamity happened, “Ah! if the dauphin had lived.” But his son, who afterwards reigned as Louis XVI., inherited many of the high principles attributed to his father, and he struggled in vain against the established order of things. He was animated by the best intentions, but he lacked firmness and energy, and they were useless, merely paving the way to his own destruction.

CHAPTER XII.

MADAME DE POMPADOUR.

THE marriage of the dauphin took place on the 23rd February, and the festivities, which, as we have already observed, were of the most costly description, lasted until the end of March. One of the only events of any moment which happened during these rejoicings is thus noticed by Barbier—"During the *fêtes* people spoke of a young woman named Madame d'Etiolles. . . . She is twenty-two years of age, and is one of the pretty women of Paris. It is said that the king saw her when hunting in the forest of Senart, and that since then she has been invited to all the balls and parties at Versailles, which makes people suspect something. This has given rise to a song concerning the husband. . . ."

After the ball at the Hôtel de Ville, Madame Lenormand d'Etiolles paid two or three secret visits to Versailles, which visits were duly returned by his Majesty. The future favourite was at that time living with her mother in the Rue des Bons Enfants—a street which still exists—in a house opposite the Hôtel d'Argenson. Louis XV. used to drive there on

the pretence of seeing his minister, and then to slip across the street to pay his court to Madame Poisson and her pretty and accomplished daughter. Mademoiselle Poisson may be said to have been to the manner born; when but nine years of age a fortune-teller called Madame Lebon, who was afterwards rewarded with a pension, predicted that she would one day become the mistress of Louis XV., and her mother trained her to fill that post. She was therefore quite prepared for the part she was destined to play with such consummate ability.

The king having remained absent for several days, Madame d'Etiolles rushed off to Versailles—fled from the imaginary fury of an incensed husband—and, bathed in tears, spoke of committing suicide, and implored the protection of his Majesty. Louis XV. sheltered his partner in adultery, gave her the apartment occupied formerly by Madame de Mailly, and, threatening D'Etiolles with the Bastille, afterwards offered to send him as ambassador to the Grand Turk. D'Etiolles objected to go to Constantinople, declaring that he could not live out of France, and so another arrangement was made with the view of enabling the king and his new mistress to carry on their guilty intercourse in peace.

To return to Barbier—

“April.—Madame d'Etiolles is now installed at Versailles, in the apartment formerly occupied by Madame de Mailly, which makes her an avowed mistress. The king sups in her apartment with the

Duchesse de Lauraguais, the Marquise de Bellefont, the Dukes of Richelieu, Ayen, Boufflers, &c. The princesses and ladies of the Court will soon be wishing for invitations.

“September.—Madame d’Etiolles, created Marquise de Pompadour, was presented on the 14th at Versailles to the king and to the queen. On the 16th the king went to his house at Choisy, the ladies who accompanied him being the Duchesse de Lauraguais, the Marquise de Bellefont, the Marquise d’Estrade, and the Marquise de Pompadour. . . . On Sunday the queen, the dauphin, and the dauphiness went to Choisy to dine, and Madame de Pompadour for the first time dined with the queen, who was very polite to her. . . . Madame de Pompadour behaves very well, especially as regards the queen. She follows the advice of Madame Poisson, her mother, who has as much wit as four devils. . . .”¹

In describing the reception of the Marquise de Pompadour, M. de Maurepas says that there were a great number of people present when she went to pay her respects to the queen, for all Paris was anxious to know what her Majesty would say to her. It had been concluded that she could speak to her of nothing but her dress, which is the

¹ Madame Poisson died in December 1745, when the following stinging epitaph was circulated—

“Ci-gît qui, sortant du fumier,
Pour faire sa fortune entière,
Vendit son honneur au fermier
Et sa fille au propriétaire.”

ordinary conversation of ladies who have nothing else to say. The queen, informed that Paris had already arranged her conversation, made up her mind to speak of something else. She knew that Madame de Pompadour was acquainted with Madame de Saissac, and told her that she had met her in Paris, and was very glad to have made her acquaintance. It is not known if Madame de Pompadour heard what the queen said, for she spoke very low, but she seized the opportunity to assure her Majesty of her respect and her desire to please her. The queen appeared to be satisfied with what Madame de Pompadour said. . . . The dauphin and the dauphiness spoke to Madame de Pompadour about her dress, as it had been agreed.

Concerning her personal attractions and antecedents, Barbier says—

“This Madame d’Etiolles is well made and extremely pretty, sings perfectly, and knows one hundred amusing little songs. She rides well, and has been highly educated. Her mother, Madame Poisson, is still handsome; she is the daughter of a provision contractor for the *Invalides*, and married Poisson, an intriguer.”

We then learn how Madame Poisson became the mistress first of M. le Blanc, Secretary of War, then of an ambassador, and afterwards of a Farmer-General called Le Normant, who always looked upon Jeanne Antoinette Poisson as his daughter. In due time the Farmer-General obliged his nephew to marry Made-moiselle Poisson, giving the newly-married couple the property of Etiolles. They lived with the Farmer-

General in opulence, and Barbier says of Madame d'Etiolles—"She was adored by her uncle, and was absolute mistress of the house. Was not this condition preferable for a woman of her class than the quality of mistress of the king, in the midst of a Court? . . . It is said that the king has purchased the Marquisate of Pompadour from the Prince de Conté, in order to give Madame d'Etiolles a title."

Voltaire, who was on intimate terms with the favourite, has thus described her and her family—

"Tournehem, the lover of her mother, had a country house in the neighbourhood. Madame d'Etiolles was driven about in a pretty carriage. The king remarked her, and often sent her venison. Her mother never ceased telling her that she was prettier than Madame de Châteauroux, and Tournehem often said—'It must be admitted that the daughter of Madame Poisson is a morsel for a king.' At last, when she obtained possession of the king, she told me that she believed firmly in destiny." Voltaire says that he knew Madame de Pompadour well; that she was well educated, virtuous, amiable, and full of grace and talent; that he was her confidant; that she informed him that she had always had a presentiment that the king would fall in love with her, and that she had a great inclination for his Majesty. Voltaire then tells us that he spent several months with her at Etiole while the king was campaigning in 1746, and that he obtained from this visit more recompenses than he had derived from his works and services, and

was deemed worthy of becoming one of the forty useless members of the Academy. "I was also appointed," he said, "historiographer of France, and the king made me a present of the post of gentleman-in-waiting. I therefore came to the conclusion that, in order to make one's fortune, it is better to say a few words to the king's mistress than to write a hundred volumes."

And yet Voltaire was afterwards banished for writing the following lines to the favourite—banished before Madame de Pompadour had time to interfere—

"Ainsi donc vous réunissez
 Tous les arts, tous les goûts, tous les talents de plaire. *to plaire*
 Pompadour, vous embellissez
 La cour, le Parnasse et Cythère.
 Charme de tous les cœurs, trésor d'un seul mortel,
 Qu'un sort si beau soit éternel !
 Que vos jours précieux soient marqués par des fêtes !
 Que la paix dans nos champs revienne avec Louis !
 Soyez tous deux sans ennemis,
Et tous deux gardez vos conquêtes !"

The lines are charming, but Madame Adelaïde drew the attention of her father to the insolence of the poet who presumed to compare the king's conquests in Flanders to that of his mistress, and hence exile.

D'Argenson tells us that—

"February 26th.—The royal family have begun to conspire against Madame de Pompadour. At the last meet that lady was in the carriage with the dauphin, the dauphiness, and mesdames, who agreed not to

speak to her, no matter what happened. She roared with fury. . .

“February 28th.—People attached to the Court, who see clearly, declare that Madame de Pompadour will shortly be sent away, in consequence of the king having been made to feel ashamed of his chains, and of having placed his affections so low. . .”

D'Argenson long harped on the same rumours—the dislike or hatred which the royal family evinced towards the *Marquise*, and the reports of her approaching dismissal. In April 1747, he wrote that the king had neglected her for several months, that she was much depressed, that she was growing thinner, and changing *à vue d'œil*, and, in fact, that she was becoming odious. And in May the marquis said he had been assured at Versailles that the king had taken a great dislike to Madame de Pompadour, whose charms had faded away, &c. &c., and that it was a question of replacing her by Madame de Périgord, or Madame de Rohan. And on the 29th September he treats us to the following reflection—“Should the king turn devout, or become impotent, he will fall back upon Madame de Mailly, who, it is contended, will lead this prince in the path of salvation. In December it was a question of replacing Madame de Pompadour, who was thinner than ever, by the stout Comtesse de la Marc, and the Duc d'Ayen offered his sister.”

In 1748, however, Madame de Pompadour was still in office, and on the 19th January D'Argenson

chronicled that—"Four months ago the Bishop of Mirepoix thought that he was going to fall into disgrace again; the Archbishop of Sens is treading on his heels, and this through the favour of Madame de Pompadour, who long ago swore to upset M. de Mirepoix, just as Herodias did St. John the Baptist." In February the marquis found Madame de Pompadour more mistress than ever—no getting at his Most Christian Majesty except through her—and in March he tells us that Madame de Pompadour, whose grasping disposition he often notes, "sells everything, even regiments. The master allows himself more and more to be governed by this woman. . . ." In June—"Madame de Pompadour and her family have become more powerful than ever." In July—"People from Compiègne report that the *Marquise* appears to be in greater favour than ever, and that her reign seems likely to last. There is no longer any question of another beauty more qualified for the post." In October the marquis again announced that Madame de Pompadour was to be replaced, his Majesty having fallen in love with Madame de Robecq. "He asked the queen to make the princess one of her ladies of honour on the first opportunity. The queen reflected awhile, and then consented. It was remarked that the king blushed like a child, and then became crimson, when making this demand." In March 1749, D'Argenson once more reported that the favourite was going to be sent away, "the king desiring to perform his Easter devotions, and have recourse to

God, seeing the great distress of the kingdom. It is true that the operas and amusements of Madame de Pompadour continue, and that they make the king yawn fearfully. . .” And a few days later—“All the people arriving from Versailles declare that the love of the king for the *Marquise* is at an end, and that she weeps constantly.” In May—“The king is much displeased with the dauphin and the dauphiness for having spoken ill of Madame de Pompadour on the occasion of the dismissal of M. de Maurepas ;¹ he has not been to see them since the dauphiness had a miscarriage. . . .”

Walpole, in a letter to Gray, dated Paris, January 1756, thus explains the disgrace of Maurepas—

“He employed Pondeveyle to make a song on the Pompadour ; it was clever and bitter, and did not even spare Majesty. This was Maurepas absurd enough to sing at supper at Versailles. Banishment ensued, and, lest he should ever be restored, the mistress persuaded the king that he had poisoned her predecessor, Madame de Châteauroux. . . .”

D’Argenson then treats us to the following bit of ill-natured scandal—

“I have seen a great many persons who bewailed the exile of Madame O’Brien of Lismore. The Arch-

¹ Maurepas had been made Minister of Marine when only twenty-four years of age ; he was then transferred to the Foreign Office, and was dismissed for having written an epigram against the favourite. He served again under Louis XVI., and was found wanting—more of a trifle than a minister.

bishop of Cambrai,¹ her lover, pretends that it was a personal matter between her and the king; that his Majesty wished to sleep with her, and that she refused; he even pretends that this happened at a ball with the consent of Madame Pompadour."

This is the first time that D'Argenson refers to Madame de Pompadour as a procuress for her royal lover.²

"July 7th.—Madame de Pompadour is said to have had a miscarriage last Lent, and during that time the king never left her. This redoubled his affection, and now she is more favourite than ever. . . .

"August 24th.—Madame de Pompadour has changed and changes every day. She has become a skeleton, and the lower part of her face is yellow and withered. However, the king treats her carnally better than ever. The other day several courtiers saw him embrace her cynically behind a screen" (!).

In 1750 the people began to do more than murmur, and d'Argensen tells us in the month of June that they did not spare the person of the king, and that the *Marquise*, when paying a visit in the Faubourg St. Germain, narrowly escaped being torn to pieces—was "only missed by one street." The people complain—"1st, of the augmentation of taxes, which have not been reduced since the peace; 2nd, the life which the king leads with the favourite; his conduct

¹ Charles de St. Aubin, a natural son of the regent.

² Mr. O'Brien says D'Argensen received a large sum of money and a title for persuading Henry Stuart to become a cardinal.

on the score of religion and decency, and the wild dissipation of the Court," &c. &c.

"July 19th.—Madame de Pompadour has grown much thinner, but is always agreeable; she is more brilliant than ever. It is a miracle how she can live with all that she has to do."

In January 1751, the Marquis d'Argenson assures us that the king was much affected by the sermons of the Abbé Poulle, and that this frightened the favourite; and in February he reports that his Majesty and Madame de Pompadour had become simply friends. "However, the *Marquise* fears spiritual directors and confessors, and that should some more eloquent priest than the venerable Pérusseu appear he would say—'It is not sufficient to renounce sin; the scandal also must disappear.'

"March 11th.—Devotion is all the talk of the Court, which 'follows with ardour' the sermons of Father Griffet, who thunders against the morals in fashion. In his Lent sermon preached at Versailles, he chose for his text the woman taken in adultery."

On his side Barbier says—

"March —.The king will not sleep away from Versailles during Lent. . . . The jubilee of fifty years is to be celebrated here before and after Easter. It is certain that the Pope's brief on this subject has arrived. . . . Every one is anxious with regard to this event. It is said that Madame de Pompadour dreads the consequences, and that an apartment has been prepared for her at the convent of the Assumption,

where her daughter Mademoiselle Alexandrine is. A great many people at Court, not only ecclesiastics but ladies and gentlemen, look forward to this event in order to upset the *Marquise*, who for some time past has excited hatred by the way in which she abuses her great credit."

The king had just made her a present of Bellevue, which drew forth the following stinging quatrain—

"Fille d'une sangsue, et sangsue elle-même,
Poisson, d'une arrogance extrême,
Etale en ce château, sans honte at sans effroi
La substance du peuple, et la honte du roi."

To return to d'Argenson. He says—

"March 18th.—There are indications of the disgrace of the favourite; the king is seldom absent from Versailles, and has not slept away from the palace during Lent, merely going to La Muette and Bellevue to supper; all the royal family are very devout, and the king happy in their society. His Majesty is assiduous at sermons, Father Griffet preaching boldly against adultery. The *Marquise*, dazed by what threatens her, considers that she has more right than ever to govern absolutely and arbitrarily. . . .

"March 20th.—The king has had some devotional conferences with Father Griffet, the Jesuit who is preaching the Lenten sermons at Versailles; this makes the *Marquise* tremble.

"March 24th.—Great noise about some *oremus* which have been printed to be said at St. Roch during Lent; it was the Marshal de Noailles who gave them

to the *curé* of that parish on the part of the queen. When the people heard them for the first time they complained of the innovation, thinking that they had something to do with the constitution, but they soon learned the real object. I have seen the prayers; they are taken from the Holy Evangile; they ask God 'positively' for the conversion of the king, for whom heaven had performed so many miracles, but who had shown himself so ungrateful towards God by his scandalous amours, &c. The reason why the king did not go to the last sermon of Father Griffet was because it was the intention of the Jesuit to preach about the duties of each class—sermon in which he made a sharp attack on the loves of the king and the favourite.

"March 27th.—Madame de Mailly, formerly mistress of the king, is dying of a cold on the chest. The king has not once sent openly to her, but the Marquis de Goutaut brings the king, who is afraid of offending Madame de Pompadour, four bulletins every day. . . ."

We are told that Madame de Mailly was quite a saint, and that it was generally supposed in religious circles that God was so interested in the conversion of his Majesty that her death was sent to hasten it.

"March 28th.—The Jesuits have fifteen masses said every morning for the conversion of the king, and boast of it. The Jansenists say that if the king becomes devout he will persecute them as they were persecuted in the time of Louis XIV."

The inference being that whereas the followers of

Loyola were anxious that his Majesty should repent, those of Jansenius preferred that he should remain in sin.

“April 1st.—Madame de Mailly died the day before yesterday. She is regretted by all Paris as a very kind-hearted woman, who never harmed any one during the eight years that she was the favourite of the king. Hence the extreme hatred for the woman who now replaces her. She flung herself into a ‘great and estimable devotion’ on leaving the Court, and persevered.”

Louis XV. does not seem to have been much affected by the death of his quondam mistress, but he did not go out hunting on the day he heard of it, nor did he sup with his courtiers as had been arranged; he even wept a little, but it was considered doubtful if religion had anything to say to these tears. “The *Marquise* consoles him as well as she can.” It was much feared that the king would have a long fit of melancholy or devotion.

Barbier found a few kind words for Madame de Mailly. He wrote—

“March —. The poor countess died on the 30th, at the age of forty-one years; she was buried according to her will in the cemetery of the Innocents, where poor people are interred by charity. She even wished to be buried in the ‘common ditch.’ . . . This lady has left behind her more debts than wealth. The king gave her a pension of 30,000 livres. They do her the justice to admit that she loved the king

for himself, and that she never asked for anything for herself nor dreamed of making a fortune. . . .”

If we are to believe d’Argenson, Madame de Pompadour was not so disinterested as the countess. He says—

“July 17th.—Madame de Pompadour is so rich that she has lent 500,000 francs to the Duc de Chaulnes to pay his debts. It is said that she has twenty millions in the funds, besides land, jewels, &c.”

We have seen with what delight the birth of the dauphin’s first son, the Duke of Burgundy, was hailed at Versailles, and how coldly the royal family were afterwards received by the famishing population of Paris. In a letter written to the Comtesse de Lutzelbourg, the favourite thus gave vent to her emotions—

“CHOISY, 29th September, 1751.

“You may imagine my joy, great woman, by my attachment for the king. My emotion was such that I fainted away in the ante-room. Fortunately they pushed me behind a curtain, and no one saw me but Madame de Villars and Madame d’Estrades. The dauphiness and the Duke of Burgundy are in excellent health. I saw the duke yesterday; he has eyes like his grandfather, which is clever of him (!). On Monday I am going to Crécy for five days, and then to Fontainebleau. I am going to marry the young girls in my villages”—forty-two marriages on this and another occasion, each couple receiving five hundred francs. “I give this pleasure to the king. They are coming the day after the wedding to feast and dance in the courtyard of the castle. Those marriages which the king has ordered in Paris are worthy of his kindness, but those in the provinces will do greater good. . . .”

To return to Barbier we read—

“October —. The king spent three days at Choisy, and then went to see the *Marquise* at the Château de

Crécy.¹ Fireworks had been prepared in order to celebrate the birth of the Duke of Burgundy, but the *fête* was interrupted by the death of M. Le Normant, the father-in-law of Madame de Pompadour. It was a question whether she should go into mourning, as she was not living with her husband, and no longer bore his name. The king has had a slight attack of rheumatism or gout at Crécy, which prevented him from walking. But he is so fond of sport that he went out shooting in a chair with wheels and killed two hundred head of game."

We find afterwards that the *Marquise* did go into mourning for M. de Normant.

D'Argenson then tells us that—

"October 4th.—A man from Versailles says that Madame de Pompadour bitterly complained of the small amount of joy shown by the people when the king visited Paris, on the occasion of the birth of the Duke of Burgundy, saying that they should be decimated or hung (*sic*) for their ingratitude. This has more than ever indisposed the people against her. She wanted to come to Paris, but was advised not.

"Marshal de Richelieu has not been to Court since the birth of the Duke of Burgundy. The king is said to have proposed to marry his son, the Duc de Fronsac, to Mademoiselle Alexandrine, the daughter and sole heiress of Madame de Pompadour; the

¹ The Crécy belonging to Madame de Pompadour had nothing to do with the Crécy in Picardy where the famous battle was fought, but lies close to Paris.

marshal replied that as his wife belonged to the House of Lorraine it would be first of all necessary to consult the emperor." Since then a rupture, which did not last long.

"October 9th.—Madame de Pompadour wished to come to Paris for a *Te Deum*; but the king thought that this would displease the queen, as she would have to follow in her train; it was therefore arranged that she should sup at La Muette instead. Upon this she sulked, said she had a headache, and went to bed.

"November 17th.—A tendency to unfaithfulness in the heart of our monarch is spoken of. He covets the young Madame de Choiseul, the cousin of Madame de Pompadour. It is said that the rheumatism in the knee from which he suffers, comes from a fall downstairs as he was feeling his way in the dark, when going to pay a visit to the new mistress. The *Marquise* got her cousin married, and behold, she may some day play her the same trick that the sisters of Madame de Mailly played the countess.

"November 26th.—I learn that on the day the dauphin and the dauphiness went to Notre Dame more than two thousand women assembled in the quarter crying, 'Give us bread; we are dying of hunger.' The dauphiness trembled like a leaf. The dauphin gave his purse to the captain of the guard to make a distribution, not daring to throw money to the people without the consent of the king. The women then cried, 'We do not want your money, but

bread ; we love you ; let them send away that harlot who governs the kingdom : if we get hold of her there will soon remain nothing to make relics.’ ”

And yet Madame de Pompadour was the friend and protector of the philosophers, and the philosophers were the friends of the people. But the distress all through the country was dire, and great the wrath of the sufferers. Horace Walpole refers to this in the following letter—

HORACE WALPOLE TO CONWAY.

“STRAWBERRY HILL, *June 23rd*, 1752.

“ . . . The Speaker told me t’other day that he had received a letter from Lord Hyde, which confirms what Mr. Churchill writes me, the distress and poverty of France, and the greatness of their divisions. Yet the king’s expenses are incredible ; Madame de Pompadour is continually busied in finding out new journeys and diversions, to keep him from falling into the hands of the clergy. . . . ”

“January 14th.—Madame de Pompadour is afraid to go out unless accompanied, fearing the fury of the people and her enemies. On her last return from Choisy she was preceded by two troopers. It is said that they intend giving her a guard, such as Richelieu and Mazarin had, an honour which denotes rather tyranny than splendour.”

A few days afterwards we see that Madame de Pompadour was accused by the public of having poisoned Madame d’Estrades, who wished to see her replaced by Madame de Choiseul. This rumour found no favour even in the sight of d’Argenson, who did not consider Madame de Pompadour capable of such a crime.

“February 12th.—Madame Henriette, the king’s second daughter, died yesterday at noon. An order was at once given to close the theatres, which deprived a great many persons who felt no affliction of amusing themselves. The grief of the king is extreme, and everything indicates a turn to devotion. . . . The *Marquise* acts with great dexterity in continuing to please the king; she speaks to him of nothing now but of compassion for the people, and has asked his Majesty not to make her a New Year’s gift, for fear the public should magnify it tenfold. . . . Should the king become devout the *Marquise* is prepared to follow suit; she will be no longer anything but a friend, and each will excite the other to acts of piety. A great number of people of quality live like this. One gains salvation as one can. . . .”

After harping for three or four days on the intense grief of Louis XV. for his daughter, d’Argenson says—

“February 22nd.—The king is beginning to become susceptible of consolation. His Majesty talks of sport, and amuses himself in various ways; he has taken to botany . . . better leave that to apothecaries and attend to the affairs of the State. . . .

“April 19th.—An epigram highly flattering for Madame de Pompadour has appeared; she is compared to Agnes Sorel, who drove the English out of France. Our lovely Agnes is congratulated on being destined to rid us of another public plague—the Jesuits.”

The lines in question ran thus—

“ Au livre du Destin, chapitre des grands rois,
On lit ces paroles écrites :
De France Agnes chassera les Anglois
Et Pompadour les Jesuites.”

At this date we read in Walpole's letters—

HORACE WALPOLE TO SIR HORACE MANN.

“ STRAWBERRY HILL, *October 28th*, N. S. 1752.

“ . . . Madame de Pompadour's husband has not been permitted to keep an opera-girl, because it would too frequently occasion the reflection of his not having his wife—is not that delightful decorum?—and in that country. . . .”

We much doubt the authenticity of the above statement. M. d'Etiolles certainly had for mistress an opera-girl called Rem, and he married her as soon as Madame de Pompadour died, as is shown by the following entry in Bachaumont—

“ February 11th, 1765.—M. Lenormant d'Etiolles, having married Mademoiselle Rem, an opera-girl who had been his mistress, some ill-natured wit has thus punned on her name—

‘ Pour réparer *miseriam*
Que Pompadour laisse à la France,
Son mari, plein de conscience,
Vient d'épouser *Rem publicam*.’ ”

D'Argenson thus refers to another mistress who flourished before Madame Rem, that is to say, in 1749—

“ M. d'Etiolles, the husband of the Marquise de Pompadour, keeps a fine lady of Moulins named Madame de Belnaux, and has given her far more

than 100,000 crowns' worth of diamonds. The State furnishes all that."

After a temporary eclipse we find Madame de Pompadour dismissing Madame de Choiseul "as a little harlot, who ogled the king and had other lovers." Madame de Pompadour pronounced her a serpent whom she had nourished in her bosom. Then—

"January 13th.—The *Marquise* has regained favour. She has nominated several *cordons bleus*; she has procured the despatch of sixteen *lettres de cachet* to Brittany . . ."

On the 13th February we learn that the king had a new mistress, that he was accustomed to "throw the handkerchief" to young girls or ladies whom he perceived at mass or when he dined in public, and that a young beauty from Montpellier, the daughter of President Niequest, "*had taken a jump*," and aimed at being mistress in title. And d'Argenson enters into details concerning the immorality of the king, to which we need not further allude, except in the case of Mademoiselle Murphy, whom his Majesty purchased from her mother, and installed in the famous *Parc aux cerfs*.¹

¹ There has been a good deal of misconception concerning the celebrated *Parc aux cerfs*, owing in a great measure to its misleading name. In fact, this "deer park" was nothing more than a small house in the Rue St. Médéric at Versailles, in which there was not sufficient accommodation for more than one "deer," and it was often vacant. It appears to have been hired on behalf of the king by one of his ushers of the chamber called Vallet.

"April 8th.—The king is going to Choisy for a couple of days. The Infanta, Duchess of Parma, has orders to leave next month, as her husband demands her return. Her rival (the rival of Madame de Pompadour), the little Murphy, commences to visit the king, and no longer hides her favour. She is intelligent, and has a will of her own; she is determined to drive out the *Marquise*; she is only sixteen years of age."

According to Soulavie, it was Madame de Pompadour who "tempted the king with Mademoiselle Murphy, by having the charming infant painted in a *Holy Family*, with which the pious Marie Leczinska adorned the walls of her oratory." The king was taken to see this "celestial beauty," and after falling in love with the picture, fell in love with the original.

Mademoiselle Murphy appears to have miscalculated her hold on the affections of the monarch, not being destined to supplant Madame de Pompadour.¹

But Louis XV. did not do this.

"March 21st.—Madame de Pompadour has done all she could to arrange some trips to Bellevue, but the king prefers remaining at Versailles. The little

¹ Walpole thus wrote to Sir Horace Mann on the subject of Mademoiselle—

"STRAWBERRY HILL, May 24th, 1753.

" . . . I say little of Mademoiselle Murphy, for I conclude you hear nothing but her health drunk in whisky. Don't all the naked Irish flatter themselves with preferment, and claim relation with her? Miss Chudleigh says there is some sense in belonging to a king who turns off an old mistress when he has got a new one."

Murphy is to be confined next month; she insists upon the ex-Sultana being driven from office. . . .

“June 19th.—Mademoiselle Alexandrine, the only daughter of Madame de Pompadour, has died of the small-pox at the Convent of the Assumption. The Duc de Chaulnes was going to marry his son to her, and his family would have received 30,000,000 francs. Here are edifices overthrown! M. de Vandières, brother of the favourite, will be immensely rich, and will found a great family. But it is remarked that the justice of God smites all these families founded upon illicit favour.”

Madame de Pompadour seems to have felt the loss of her daughter so acutely that for some days her own life was in danger. The king went to Bellevue every day to see her.

“November 6th.—Madame de Pompadour had bought some land in the Champs Elysées, to turn it into a kitchen garden; it was already planted and walled round, when she learned that the people murmured at this encroachment on their promenades. She immediately had the kitchen garden destroyed.

“February 5th.—Rumour of change of mistress at Court. The king has fallen desperately in love with the Duchesse de Broglie, and has written her a declaration. This has made a great stir at Versailles, for no one doubts that the first condition will be the dismissal of the *Marquise*.

“October 24th.—Marriage of Mademoiselle de Chimay with a cousin of Madame de Pompadour.

The king gives an income of 18,000 livres for this union, and the *Marquise* 8000, with all the expenses of the nuptials, amounting to 20,000 livres . . .”

Note what d’Argenson chronicled the next day—“October 25th.—The work that was going on at Toulon to prepare a large fleet for sea has ceased, or at least greatly slackened, for want of money.”

The cousin of Madame de Pompadour above referred to was a Monsieur de Cambis; his wife, we are told, refused to consummate the marriage with her husband, “wishing to reserve herself for our monarch, and the husband is going to return to his estates.”

“December 28th.—. . . The king has married his mistress, Mademoiselle de Murphy, Irish, and the daughter of a cobbler, to a man of quality, who is a relation of the Prince de Soubise, who acted as best man at the marriage. She was given 200,000 livres in silver; 1000 livres in jewels, and 1000 louis for expenses of nuptials. She was told at four a.m. to start for Paris, and was escorted there. On her arrival she received the unexpected order to marry, and was despatched to the province of her husband (*sic*). The king has adopted the child he had by her, and we shall see him made a great noble. His Majesty has taken for new mistress a hairdresser’s daughter, who is said to be very pretty. Madame de Pompadour remains the friend, and plays the part of prime minister.”

The new mistress was a Mademoiselle Fouquet,

“lovely and witty, who will probably replace Madame de Pompadour.” As for the husband selected for Mademoiselle Murphy, he was an infantry officer called d’Ayat, described by d’Argenson as “a poor gentleman of Auvergne, who, with his mother, possessed 800 livres a year, and a small house at the foot of the mountains. He left home after his marriage, and the *belle* has orders not to show herself in any town.”

In a note we find that Marie Louise Murphy de Boisfaily, according to the marriage contract, was eighteen years of age when she married, that her father was Daniel Murphy de Boisfaily, an Irish gentleman, who died in Paris, June 1753, and of his widow *née* Margaret Hickey. That the Prince de Soubise and the Marquis de Lugeac were “witnesses” of the marriage; that assistant Major-General d’Ayat was killed at Rosbach (where Soubise commanded and was defeated), and that his widow married François Nicolas Lenormant (a relation of Madame de Pompadour).

It is edifying to find that while such gross immorality reigned at Court, vice met with its just retribution in the lower orders of society. Thus we find—

“January 13th. — Yesterday three women who debauched and detained the daughters of citizens by force, were mounted upon donkeys, were fustigated at the cross roads, and were marked with the *fleur de lys*. . . . The party of Madame de Pompadour

exercises more influence than ever on the Government, and the king appears to be quite at the orders of this body of *favoris* and *favorites*. The ministers are bewildered, and have lost all credit.

“January 30th.—The *Marquise* has greater influence than ever, and gives orders to the ministers. . . . It is said that the *Marquise* carries on a secret correspondence with George II., who has written to her with his own hand. This correspondence was commenced in the following manner. His Britannic Majesty began forming a cabinet of the portraits of all the pretty women in Europe, and asked for that of the *Marquise*. Owing to this she has conceived the wild hope of being able to settle matters with England,” and of putting an end to war between the two countries.

“February 10th.—On Sunday evening it was announced that Madame de Pompadour had been received among the ladies of the palace to the queen, which is equivalent to a declaration that she is no longer openly the mistress of the king; it is even said that she begins to speak of devotion and Molinism; therefore she is going to try and please the queen as she formerly pleased the king. All the credit which she has enjoyed for the last three years during which the king has had new mistresses, is but the reward for the quiet manner with which she has regarded the infidelities of her lover; this is only precarious. It is supposed that this lady will remain the friend of the king, and that she will act as peacemaker between

husband and wife, be an arbitrator and channel for all favours for the royal family; be regular in the practices of religion; if not devout, charitable, of irreproachable conduct and declared cleansed of all pollution as regards the king. . . .”

And so on in a tone of banter.

“February 12th.—As was suspected: the *Marquise* has become devout in order to please the queen; however, she still employs rouge, and pays more attention than ever to her toilette. She has taken the Jesuit Father Sacy for confessor. . . . She gets up at night to pray, goes to mass every day, fasts, and has had all the passages between her apartments and those of the king stopped up. She has written to her husband to offer to return to him. . . . The queen and the royal family are highly satisfied with the ‘regularity’ of this lady’s conscience. It is said that the king has two new mistresses.”

It was at this period that a pretty little comedy was performed by Madame de Pompadour and a select company. The *Marquise* aimed at becoming a kind of Madame de Maintenon—the friend and adviser of the king, but no longer his mistress; but first of all it was necessary for her to become reconciled to the Church, and by a public conversion to put an end to all scandal. For this object Father Sacy, a Jesuit, was called in—“a man well versed in all the trickeries of the conscience and the deceptions of repentance.” Father Sacy set to work with the best will in the world “to place God within reach of the

Marquise," and his task was followed with considerable interest by all those who desired to see the philosophers deprived of the support of the favourite. While the good father was haggling over the matter of solemn confession and absolution, the dauphin and the more austere members of the Catholic party took fright, and raised a terrible cry against poor Sacy, who permitted his penitent to make use of rouge and to indulge in other worldly practices. Upon this the superiors of Father Sacy ordered him to discontinue his visits, and to cease all communication with Madame de Pompadour. In a farewell conference Father Sacy told the favourite that the fact of living at Court away from her husband constituted a public scandal, which rendered absolution impossible. He added that if she desired to fulfil her Christian duties she must either return to M. d'Etiolles, or leave the Court. This was not at all to the taste of Madame de Pompadour, who had no idea of quitting her post, or resuming the bonds of matrimony. She dismissed Father Sacy in anger, and it is supposed that the ills which afterwards befell the Society of Jesus were not unconnected with this little episode.

Madame de Pompadour was all the more vexed at this defeat, as, in order to give her a regular standing at the Court, she had applied to be appointed a lady in waiting to the queen. Her Majesty, who seldom resisted any wish expressed by the king, remonstrated in this instance against appointing a person who lived "fraudulently separated" from her husband. She

said that his Majesty might order what he liked ; that she would always make it her duty to obey him ; but she hoped that he would have too much respect for the royal family to inflict such an affront upon it. She observed that the place in question required to be filled by a lady of undoubted honour, and that it was too delicate a post to be given to a person labouring under excommunication, and who would not dare to present herself at the communion-table during Easter.

The Court and the public were highly amused at the dilemma in which the *Marquise* was placed, but she was not to be easily foiled. She wrote a long letter to her husband, expressing contrition for the past ; she was a guilty wife ; she was filled with remorse ; would he take her back ? It is true that before her husband could receive this letter, M. de Soubise had paid him a visit, had announced its approaching arrival, and had strongly advised him, as a friend, not to accept the offers of his faithless wife, lest he should disoblige the king. Now d'Etiolles was a very complacent husband, and if now and then he threatened to put in an appearance at Versailles, and “ to make the rafters of the palace resound with cries for justice,” his silence and his absence were easily purchased. In reply to the communication handed to him by M. de Soubise, he declared himself perfectly resigned to obey the orders of the king ; and he wrote to Madame de Pompadour, in the most respectful terms, according her a full

pardon, but firmly declining to receive her back into his bosom.

On the receipt of this refusal, Madame de Pompadour was loud in her wail. She knew that she had sinned, but she had repented, and had done all in her power to repair her fault. How could she be reproached for not living with a husband who refused to receive her? There was no answer to that. The Church considered that the resistance it had offered was enough to save its dignity. The queen was obliged to give way, and the favourite obtained her nomination and a *tabouret*, and could sit in the royal presence.

“February 13th.—The promotion of Madame de Pompadour,” writes D’Argenson, “is universally condemned, and it is hoped that the king, when aware of this, will disgrace the favourite. Religion is openly offended; hypocrisy is the soul of the whole affair. The other Jesuits, and especially Father Griffet, have blamed the conduct of Father Sacy. . . The ladies of the household intend representing to the queen that they cannot remain at their posts, having for companion Mademoiselle Poisson, daughter of a *laquais* who was condemned to be hung. The queen receives her badly, and she has complained to the king, who could not sleep all night. . . The *Marquise* pretends that she is going to convert the king, and bring him back to religion by her example. . . However, they speak of a new mistress for the king, the Comtesse de Noé, who is very poor and very

anxious. . . Madame de Pompadour has also the pretension of bringing about peace between France and England, and of reaping all the honour. . . However, it is declared that we are about to seize upon the Isle of Corsica, in order to prevent it from falling into the hands of the English. . .”

Horace Walpole thus refers to these matters in the following letter to Sir Horace Mann—

“ARLINGTON STREET, *February* 23rd, 1756.

“ . . . You will have heard before you receive this that the King of France and Madame de Pompadour are gone into devotion. Some say that D’Argenson, finding how much her inclination for peace with us fell in with the monarch’s humanity (and which is the only rational account one can give of their inactivity), employed the Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld and the confessor to threaten the most Christian king with an earthquake if he did not communicate at Easter, and that his Majesty accordingly made over his mistress to his wife, by appointing the former *Dame du Palais*; others, who refine more, pretend that Madame de Pompadour, perceiving how much the king’s disposition veered to devotion, artfully took the turn of humouring it, desired to be only his soul’s concubine, and actually sent to ask pardon of her husband, and to offer to return to him, from which he begged to be excused—the point in dispute is whether she has or has not left off rouge. In our present hostile state we cannot arrive at any certainty on this important question, though our fate seems to depend upon it.”

“February 25th.—The king carries on more than ever with the Marquise de Pompadour; he is going to spend three days with her at Bellevue, and it is said at the expense of that lady. She has left her confessors, and laughs at her hypocrisy. It is reported that the reply made by the queen to the king, to give the post of lady of the palace to the *Marquise*,

was composed by President Henault. Be it known that, although the queen goes to see the king every day when he rises, if they have anything to ask each other it is always by letter. This answer was—‘Sire, I have a King in heaven who gives me strength to support my misfortunes, and a king upon earth whom I shall always obey.’

“June 10th.—Madame de Pompadour gives herself out as the principal author of our unsatisfactory treaty with the Court of Vienna, and as having made a good party stroke in order to give us a powerful friend and at the same time to play a trick on the King of Prussia. There is much talk about the marriage of the granddaughter of the king, the daughter of *Madame Infante* and Don Philip, with the Archduke Joseph, in return for which we are going to connive at the election of her intended husband as King of the Romans.¹ . . .

“June 12th.—I have heard some anecdotes about our alliance with the Court of Vienna; it was the work of Madame de Pompadour, of the Court, and of women,² in which family affection played a great

¹ This marriage took place in 1760, and the archduke reigned as the Emperor Joseph II.

² The women being the Empress Maria Theresa, the czarina, the dauphiness, *Madame Infante*, and the favourite. Strange to say, in the war which ensued, the French force sent against the King of Prussia was commanded by one of the Pompadour’s generals, and went by the name of *La Dauphine*, for had not the dauphiness, Marie Josephe of Saxony, gone down on her knees to implore Louis XV. to fly to the rescue of her father beleaguered in Pirna?

part, and in which the interests of the State were laid aside, which is not right on the part of our 'well beloved' monarch. This is the danger of having favourites whose advice is listened to. Woe to any subject who, having anything to fear from the Court, should blame this treaty! The *Marquise* has placed herself at the head of this treaty, and has rendered herself more necessary and more favourite than ever, although the king has at present a little seraglio composed of three young and pretty *grisettes*.¹ . . ."

It has often been asserted that Maria Theresa, in order to gain the support of France, condescended to write to her *chère amie*, Madame de Pompadour, who was so flattered that she persuaded Louis XV. to join in the attack upon Frederick the Great, guilty of constantly turning her into ridicule. The Chevalier d'Arneth points out that Maria Theresa, writing on the 10th October, 1763, to the Electress of Saxony, Maria Antonia, distinctly denied ever having penned the letter, or letters, in question.—“You are mistaken,” wrote Maria Theresa, “if you believe that we ever had any dealings with the Pompadour. Never did either letter or ambassador

¹ The Duc de Luynes tells us that one of these mistresses painted very well, and did the king's portrait. This was Mademoiselle Hénaut. Another called Robert was extremely pretty, clever, and well educated. One lives at the Parc aux Cerfs, and the other at the palace. A third mistress, Mademoiselle Fouquet, received 10,000 crowns and was married. It may be added that the *grisette* of the reign of Louis XV. was hardly the same as the *grisette* of our day, and meant simply a girl who wore a stuff dress instead of silk or satin.

pass by that channel; our ambassadors were obliged to pay her court like all the others, but there was never any intimacy: that channel would not have suited me." This is very explicit, but is it quite true?

There may be some doubt as to the flattering notes. Who has seen them? Carlyle, after mentioning their existence, adds—"They ought to have been printed before this, or given at least to the museums."

In 1758 Horace Walpole, writing to Sir Horace Mann, said— . . . "Knyphausen diverted me yesterday with some anecdotes of the empress's college of chastity—*not* the Russian empress's. The King of Prussia asked some of his Austrian prisoners whether their mistress consulted her college of chastity on the letters she wrote (and he intercepted) to Pompadour."

Knyphausen was the Prussian ambassador to the Court of Versailles, and would naturally try to discredit Maria Theresa. If his master intercepted the letters of the empress, why did he not publish them? As for the ambassador's sneer about the college of chastity, what did it amount to? The college of chastity was simply an institution for the suppression of immorality, under the control of the police, and had nothing ridiculous about it but its name, which was misleading.

But if we may be allowed to doubt the letters, were there no conferences held in September, 1755, at Babiole,¹ between the Pompadour, the Austrian

¹ A pleasure residence of Madame de Pompadour.

ambassador Stahremberg, and De Bernis (afterwards cardinal?), and was not the treaty with Austria settled at this conclave?

In his description of the reception of Voltaire at Berlin in 1750, Carlyle says that it was all splendour and kindness; really extraordinary. — “Reception perfect in all points, except that of the Pompadour’s compliments alone. ‘That sublime creature’s compliments to your Majesty; such her express command!’ said Voltaire. ‘*Je ne la connais pas,*’ answered Frederick, with his clear-ringing voice, ‘I don’t know her’—sufficient intimation to Voltaire, but painful and surprising. For which some diplomatic persons blame Frederick to this day; but not I, or any reader of mine. A very proud young king; in his silent way, always the prouder; and stands in no awe of the Divine Butterflies and Crowned Infatuations never so potent, as more prudent people do.”¹ And Knyphausen, the Prussian ambassador at the Court of Versailles, had strict orders to avoid all contact with the Pompadour.

Alas! when the fortunes of Frederick were at their lowest ebb seven years later, he, the “very proud young king,” had to acknowledge the power, if not stand in awe of the Divine Butterfly and Crowned Infatuation. Writing to his sister on the 7th July, 1757, he said—“You are too good; I am ashamed to abuse your indulgence. But do, since you will, try to sound the French. . . . Send that Mirabeau (the uncle of

¹ *Frederick the Great*, t. vi. p. 184.

the great Mirabeau) to France. Willingly will I pay the expense. He may offer as much as five million thalers (£750,000) to the favourite for peace alone. Of course his utmost discretion will be needed.”¹ And this was but the second year of the Seven Years’ War! We shall merely add that there is no trace of any such Mirabeau mission as that proposed by Wilhelmina, the Margravine of Bareuth, and accepted by the King of Prussia, but the fact remains that Frederick, in his hour of need, was not above employing what Maria Theresa contemptuously called “that channel.”

By the treaty concluded between the empress and the French king, the system of European alliances was entirely changed. Austria became the friend of her hereditary enemy, France, and the enemy of her ancient ally, England; while France, who had so recently marched with Frederick the Great, engaged to attack him. Austria, by this treaty, was to recover Silesia, for Maria Theresa could not see a Silesian without crying. The Low Countries were to be given to a Bourbon of the Spanish branch, and France was to have Mons and Luxemburg.

D’Argenson tells us that, although the king esteemed him, and even showed him friendship, he could not help condemning the Austrian alliance. “The knot, or the mainspring of all this, is to be found in the blind love of the king for his granddaughter, and a feeling of rancour against our

¹ *Frederick the Great*, t. vii. p. 175.

most solid ally, the King of Prussia, and the Jesuits.”¹

In his essay on Frederick the Great, Macaulay expressed the greatest surprise that France should have gone to war with Prussia. “With France,” he said, “Frederick could never have any serious controversy. His territories were so situated that his ambition, greedy and unscrupulous as it was, could never impel him to attack her of his own accord. He was more than half a Frenchman; he wrote, spoke, read nothing but French. . . It seemed incredible that any French Government, however notorious for levity or stupidity, could spurn away such an ally.” But minor and personal influences proved more weighty than the gravest political considerations when combined with family interests and feminine rancour.

On the subject of the Damiens affair the marquis, after giving a description of the crime which took

¹ It may appear strange, placing the philosopher king and the Jesuits in the same category, but when the Jesuits were driven from Rome, from France, from Spain, and elsewhere, they were welcomed in Prussia. “Whereas,” said Frederick, “my brothers the kings, most Catholic, most Christian, most Faithful and Apostolic, have tumbled them out, I, most Heretical, pick out as many as I can; and perhaps one day I shall be courted by those who want some. I preserve the breed; I said, counting my stock the other day, ‘A Rector like you, my Father, I could easily sell for 200 thalers; you, Reverend Father Provincial, for 600; and so the rest in proportion. When one is not rich one makes speculations.’”—Carlyle’s *History of Frederick the Great*, Book XXI., chap. viii.—Conversations between Frederick and the Prince de Ligne.

place on the 5th January, 1757, much to the astonishment of the Well Beloved, who exclaimed—"Why should they wish to kill me? I have never injured any one," says—"People talk of great explanations between the king and the queen, with fine promises on his part to remain for ever faithful. It is said that the *Marquise* has gone to Croissy.

"January 14th.—M. de Marigny, the brother of Madame de Pompadour, has been confronted with Damiens, who for a year was in the service of his mistress, the wife of a clerk at Versailles, whom he ran away with four days after her marriage. Damiens was her footman, and was dismissed for insolence. . . The *Marquise* does not see the king, or sees him secretly. . .

"January 15th.—It is true that since the attempt on the king's life the *Marquise* has not seen his Majesty for a moment. She supports her disgrace by dissimulating. By degrees every one is abandoning her. She has not even received a note from the king, who seems to have forgotten her. In the meantime the king sees his confessor, Father Desmarets, every day, and has made many friendly and virtuous declarations to the queen. Everything betokens great changes at Court. The dauphin belongs to the Council, and gains credit.

"January 16th.—Yesterday the king paid a visit to the *Marquise*, and he intends going to chapel this morning. . .

"January 17th.—On Saturday evening the king

paid a visit to the *Marquise*, concerning whose lot there is now no uncertainty.

“January 18th. . .”

The Marquis d'Argenson could get no further; the pen fell from his hands, and a few days later he expired. He was called *L'Enfant terrible de la monarchie*, and this nickname was not badly earned. Unfortunately, his journal is too much a work of passion to be of value as an historical record. His hatred exceeded the bounds of common decency, and nothing which his pen could write, or his imagination suggest, was too bitter for his opponents, no matter what their sex.

It must be borne in mind that there were two d'Argensons, the marquis who was Minister of Foreign Affairs for thirteen years and who wrote the Journal; and the count who was first Minister of Police and then Minister of War. While devoted to the king, the marquis professed liberal principles far in advance of his epoch. Jean Jacques Rousseau quoted his opinions in the *Contrat Social*, and Voltaire declared that he would have made an excellent Secretary of State in the Republic of Plato. In a work called *Considérations sur le gouvernement de France*, he demanded decentralization; that all local administration should be abandoned to the municipal and cantonal councils; he also advocated free trade at home and abroad. He even dared to write—“People will say that the principles advocated in this work, favourable to democracy, aim at the destruction of the nobility,

and they are not mistaken. The two principal objects to be desired for the welfare of the State are, first, that all citizens should be equal ; secondly, that every one should be the son of his own works. The nobles play the part of drones in a hive."

Madame de Pompadour hated both the d'Argensons, and she appears to have long exerted all her influence with the king to get the count dismissed from office, but in vain. Louis XV., weary at last of the opportunity of his mistress, acted in his usual vacillating manner ; he got Madame de Soubise to remonstrate with her on the subject, to tell her that he was pleased with his minister, was accustomed to his method of doing business, and desired to be no longer bothered about him. After which Madame de Pompadour refrained for a time from making any more direct assaults on d'Argenson's position.

To return to the Damiens affair, which caused such a terrible commotion at Versailles, it appears that the favourite was dreadfully frightened, not hearing from the " Well-Beloved," and knowing that he was capable of dismissing her without the slightest ceremony. The people were threatening *la coquine du roi*, as they called her, with death. She wept and fainted, and fainted and wept again. In vain did the Cardinal de Bernis, the Duchesse de Brancas, and the Contrôller-General, St. Florentin, looking in now and then, try to console her. Where was Machault, the keeper of the Seals ? His presence would allay all doubt. At length he came, "stiff and cold as a death-warrant."

He remained half an hour shut up alone with the favourite, and when her comforters were re-admitted they found her in tears, and her teeth chattering to such an extent that in order to calm her nerves it was necessary to administer *fleur d'oranger* in a silver tankard, as she would have broken a wine-glass. She appeared determined to leave Versailles, and gave orders for her house in Paris to be prepared for her reception.

The reign of the Pompadour, however, was not at an end. His Majesty remained in bed for several days longer than the doctors considered necessary, and even after he got up he remained for a week without seeing the favourite. However, having occasion to pass by the staircase leading to her apartment, he could not resist the temptation of paying her a visit; the force of habit proved too strong for him. All his promises to the queen were soon forgotten, as well as his determination to repent and reform.

Then followed a sort of hecatomb similar to that witnessed after the royal indigestion at Metz, and two ministers went to the wall. Poor Machault, the Keeper of the Seals, was sacrificed very basely, and what Besenval tells us on this subject is exceedingly curious, but quite in keeping with the character of Louis XV. He says that shortly after his Majesty was wounded, being more terrified than he ought to have been, he thought it necessary to banish Madame de Pompadour. When left alone with M. de Machault,

after his trifling wound had been dressed, he directed him, as a friend of the favourite, not to convey an order on his part, but to advise her, on his own behalf, to take a noble and necessary decision. Machault accomplished his mission with considerable skill, but Madame de Mirepoix, who was present, strongly advised Madame de Pompadour not to leave Versailles, and she remained. When his Majesty recovered he conceived a dislike to M. de Machault, whom he had taken into his confidence, and who was a living witness of his cowardly fears. The consequence of all this was a compromise. Louis XV. said that he would sacrifice the Comte D'Argenson if Madame de Pompadour would sacrifice Machault. The favourite consented, and the Controller-General and the Minister of Foreign Affairs were both dismissed the same day, and it is reported that it was the favourite herself who wrote the letters which announced their disgrace.¹

No sooner was the king restored to health than Madame de Pompadour recovered her power, and was soon more unpopular than ever with the people. The generals appointed by the favourite were disgracefully beaten. Soubise lost the battle of Rosbach against

¹ Writing from Paris to Gray (date doubtful), Horace Walpole said—

“ . . . When the king was stabbed and heartily frightened, the mistress took a panic too, and consulted D'Argenson whether she had not best make off in time. He hated her, and said—‘ By all means.’ Madame de Mirepoix advised her to stay. The king recovered his spirits, D'Argenson was banished, and Madame de Mirepoix inherited part of the mistress's credit.”

Frederick the Great, while Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Comte de Clermont, a member of the Condé family, and *abbé* of St. Germain-des-Près, nicknamed by his Prussian Majesty the General of the Benedictines. Both Soubise and De Clermont were sadly lampooned. The first was represented as looking for his army with a lantern on the morning after the battle, and wondering what had become of it. He had thus announced his defeat to the king.—“I write to your Majesty in a paroxysm of despair. Your army has been completely routed; I cannot say how many of your officers have been killed, captured, or are missing.”

For the loss of Crevelt Paris sought consolation in the following epigram directed against the Abbé de Clermont—

“Moitié plumet, moitié rabat,
Aussi propre à l'un comme à l'autre,
Clermont se bat comme un apôtre,
Et sert Dieu comme il se bat.”¹

Nor was the favourite spared, as we may see by the following letter:

HORACE WALPOLE TO GEORGE MONTAGU.

“STRAWBERRY HILL, *October 11th*, 1759.

“... You have seen the French epigram on Madame de Pompadour, and fifty vile translations of it. Here is mine—

¹ “Half plume, half bands,
As fit for one as for the other,
Clermont fights like an apostle,
And serves God as he fights.”

“ O yes ! here are flat-bottomed boats to be sold,
 And soldiers to let—rather hungry than bold :
 Here are ministers richly deserving to swing,
 And commanders whose recompense should be a string.
 O France ! still your fate you may lay at Pitt’s door ;
 You were saved by a maid, and undone by a . . .

Poor Clermont was not, however, wholly to blame, for when he succeeded Richelieu in command of the army, he had found it necessary to cashier eighty officers. Richelieu, in fact, called by his troops (whom he encouraged to plunder) *le bon père la Maraude*, had left him nothing but an army of marauders.

The following year Prince Ferdinand defeated Marshal de Contades at Minden. Clive conquered India, the pusillanimous Dupleix complaining that, instead of receiving money and soldiers from France, he had been sent *la plus vile canaille*.¹ Quebec was taken by Wolfe, and Canada lost because, as Duruy says, Madame Pompadour cost France 4,000,000 francs a year, and for want of that sum it was found impossible to despatch the required reinforcements of 4000 soldiers who had offered to remain in the colony after the end of the war. At sea Hawke

¹ Macaulay, in his essay on Lord Clive, thus describes the force with which that Captain marched against Covelong—“ It consisted of 500 newly levied Sepoys, and 200 recruits who had just landed from England, and who were the worst and lowest wretches that the Company’s crimps could pick up in the flash-houses of London.” There was therefore little to choose between the French and English contingents in the way of respectability. Both were as bad as the collection of scamps who founded Rome ; but Clive was a soldier, and Dupleix merely a diplomatist, quite unfit to work with such materials.

utterly destroyed the fleet of one of Madame de Pompadour's admirals, M. de Conflans, and the above and other disasters were redeemed by no success of importance.

It was during these days of adversity that Madame de Pompadour recalled the Duc de Choiseul from the embassy at Vienna, and made him Foreign Minister. Of his chief work—the *pacte de famille*—we shall speak in a separate chapter.

The power of Madame de Pompadour over the king has been compared to that formerly exercised by Cardinal Fleury, but our opinion is that the mistress merely divined the intentions of the monarch, and led him in the path he was inclined to go. But this was a support for a feeble mind, and a sort of relief from responsibility, or from such responsibility as sits however lightly on the conscience. It was always some consolation to Louis XV. to be able to say of the woman—"She gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Madame de Pompadour was a scape-goat. Voltaire says that the people imputed all their sufferings to her.

She was now about to die. We have seen how often the Marquis d'Argenson considered her end at hand. She had long been wasting away, and nothing but stimulants and her courage had kept her alive. Her health had always been delicate. In spite of the brilliancy of her position, her constitution had been undermined by anxiety. She existed for years in a state of continual alarm. She knew that the king

might cast her off at a moment's notice—when some new beauty made her appearance; when he fell ill, and the fear of the Evil One got hold of him; when a preacher thundered against David; when he was assailed by any great grief, such as that which he experienced when Madame Henriette died; when an attempt was made on his life. Then she was hated by the whole royal family, by the Parliament, by the Jesuits, by the people, and even by some of the king's trusted ministers. In addition to all this, her personal attractions had commenced to fade at an early date. How could she possibly hope to retain her hold on the heart of Louis XV. under so many disadvantages? And yet she succeeded, and her reign ended only with her death. She had been carefully educated, and had captivated the king by the lighter graces. She could sing and dance, as well as paint and engrave, and her skill in the matter of toilette was unrivalled. She had a peculiar talent for keeping the king amused with trips to various residences, with suppers, balls, theatricals, hunting, and building, for Louis, like all the Bourbons, and, indeed, like Frederick the Great, was much addicted to stone and mortar. She was supposed to be immensely rich, but she was often much embarrassed for money. In 1758 she wrote to her friend, the Comtesse de Lutzelbourg, saying—"I have sold my diamond knot to pay my debts. Is not that fine?"

At last Madame de Pompadour could no longer

resist the wear and tear of her existence. She fell ill in the spring of 1764, and is said to have rouged a few days before she died, probably remembering the wishes of the king when the pallor of Madame Henriette announced her approaching dissolution, and startled him so disagreeably.

It was at Choisy that the *Marquise* fell ill. The king went to see her nearly every day, and received couriers every hour, and then, in spite of etiquette, he had her removed to Versailles, where none but royalty had a right to die. She wished to die at peace with the philosophers whom she had befriended, and with the Church whose sacraments she had set at nought. A short time before she breathed her last she was visited by the *curé* of the Madeleine, and when he rose to retire she said—"Wait a little longer, and we will go together."

Louis XV. may have felt the loss of Madame de Pompadour in a way, but he shed no tears, and showed no external evidence of grief. It was raining when her remains were borne to the grave. From a window of his palace the king saw the funeral pass by, and the only remark which the sight of this mournful pageant elicited was—"Poor *Marquise*, she has bad weather for her voyage." And hardly had she been buried when the neglected queen wrote to President Hénault—"Besides, no more mention is made of *what no longer is* than if it had never existed. So with the world; it is worth while loving it." Poor queen—she was herself about to leave it, after

a long and sad experience of the fragility of human happiness.

It is difficult to form a just estimate of the character of Madame de Pompadour. At the time she flourished conjugal fidelity hardly existed. A couple true to their marriage vows were looked upon as kill-joys. Appearances alone were observed. Taine tells us that husband and wife did not live together, and seldom saw their children. In a note he quotes the following anecdotes. "The Duke of —, whose wife had given cause for a scandal, complained to his mother-in-law; she replied with the greatest coolness—'Ah, sir! you make much ado about nothing; your father was much better company.'" And—"A husband said to his wife, 'I will allow you anything but princes and valets.'" The two extremes were considered equally dishonourable, and liable to cause scandal. Then—"A husband surprising his wife simply said to her—'What imprudence, madam; if it had been any one else but me!'"

Such was the state of society in the days of the Well-Beloved. There was hardly a Court lady who could throw a stone at Madame de Pompadour, who is therefore entitled to the same forbearance as the woman taken in adultery.¹

¹ Sidney Smith writing about Madame d'Epinay in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1818, said in excuse of that lady's immorality—"A Frenchwoman seems almost always to have wanted the flavour of prohibition as a necessary condiment to human life. The provided husband was rejected, and the forbidden husband introduced in ambiguous light through posterns and secret partitions. It was not

People said that the favourite had invested immense sums abroad, and yet it appears that on her death-bed she was much tormented about money matters, and that only 37 louis were found in her writing-table. But if she died in pecuniary difficulties, she had cost the State vast sums, and she left behind her real estate and other property of enormous value. In the way of residences she was possessed of Bellevue, which the king built for her, then purchased from her, finally making her a present of it; Babiole, Brimborion, Ménars, Crècy, Montretout, Celle, with hermitages at Compiègne and Fontainebleau, and a mansion in Paris. She is said to have spent 1,300,000 francs on knick-knacks, 3,500,000 francs on her table, 4,000,000 francs on *fêtes* of various kinds, 3,000,000 francs on carriages and horses, 2,000,000 francs on diamonds, 80,000 francs on pictures, and 12,000 francs on books! It took two years to sell off her furniture. The bulk of her property she left to her brother, the Comte de Marigny. She left legacies to all her servants, to numerous friends, and she begged the king to accept her house in Paris for the Comte de Provence (afterwards Louis XVIII.)—a house now

the union to one man that was objected to—for they dedicated themselves with a constancy which the most household and parturient woman in England could not exceed—but the thing wanted was the wrong man, the gentleman without the ring, the master unsworn to at the altar, the person unconsecrated by priests. . . .” This state of affairs of course arises from the Frenchwoman not being allowed to select in the first instance, and not falling in with a suitable mate until after marriage.

known as the Elysée, and which is at present the official residence of the President of the Republic.

That Madame de Pompadour was a patron of art and literature there is no denying, but it is a question whether she had any real taste for or loved either. France owes her the manufacture of Sèvres; but Sèvres was created in order to cut out Dresden, and may be almost called a work of revenge. She is said to have favoured the idea of terminating the Louvre, and of uniting there all the works of art belonging to the Crown. This may have been so. As regards literature, she is supposed to have patronized the philosophers more through hatred of the Jesuits than anything else, and it was, thanks to this feeling, that she protected such writers as Voltaire, Diderot, Montaigne, and D'Alembert.

Among the many epitaphs written for Madame de Pompadour, we may cite the following, supposed to be traced beneath her bust, on one side of which is Hymen, on the other Love, both in tears, with torches reversed.

“ Ci-git Poisson de Pompadour

Qui charma la ville et la cour ;

Femme infidèle, et maîtresse accomplie.

L'Hymen et l'Amour n'ont pas tort, *W. H. W.*

Le premier de pleurer sa vie ;

Le second de pleurer sa mort.”

St. Beuve, who has traced her portrait, admits that Madame de Pompadour loved the king for himself; but she was naturally cold, and it was impossible for her to love with passion.

A month after her death Horace Walpole wrote to Sir Horace Mann.

“STRAWBERRY HILL, *May 14th*, 1764.

“. . . D'Eon told people in the park the other day that Madame de Guerchy (who is remarkably plain) was going to Paris to take Madame de Pompadour's place. We do not hear that it is seriously filled up; I mean in the cabinet, for in the bedchamber it has long been executed by deputies.”

Concerning one of the “deputies” referred to by Horace Walpole, we are told by Barbier that—

“The king has a new mistress, intelligent, pretty, well made, and well educated, who having refused to live in the Parc-aux-Cerfs, was lodged at Auteuil, from whence she used to drive to Versailles in a coach-and-six to see his Majesty. She had a child whom she wished to nurse herself, and have called the Comte de Blois, or De Gisors.”

This was Mademoiselle Romans, whose son was taken from her and reared in ignorance of his birth. He is said to have borne an extraordinary resemblance to Louis XV. After a long search his mother found him; he afterwards took holy orders, and was known as the Abbé de Bourbon.

What was peculiarly disgraceful in this case was, that when the king was first smitten by the charms of Mademoiselle Romans, she was too young to be his mistress, and he had her kept by for him for two years. She continually bewailed her fall, and in the end his Majesty grew weary of her lamentations.

Madame de Pompadour was quickly followed to

the grave by King Stanislas, by the dauphin, the dauphiness, and the queen.

Concerning the demise of his ex-Polish Majesty, Horace Walpole wrote to Sir Horace Mann—

“PARIS, *February 29th*, 1766.

“The Court is plunged into another deep mourning for the death of old Stanislaus, who fell into the fire; it caught his night-gown and burned him terribly before he got assistance; his subjects are in despair, for he was a model of goodness and humanity. . . . The Poles had not the sense to re-elect him after his virtues were proved—they who had chosen him before they knew him. . . . He has left 600,000 livres and a *rente viagère* of 40,000 crowns to the queen, saved from his Polish estates, from his pension of two millions, and from his own liberality (*sic*).”

Voltaire has left us an amusing sketch of how Stanislas passed his time in Lorraine. He relates in his *Memoirs* how he and Madame de Châtelet went to see Stanislas when he held Court at Luneville, and, old and devout, was living between his mistress, Madame de Boufflers, and a Jesuit called Menou—the most daring priest that Voltaire ever met. Menou managed to extract vast sums of money from Stanislas, leaving Madame de Boufflers hardly enough to purchase petticoats, and in addition to this had the audacity to try and induce his Majesty to dismiss Madame de Boufflers, and to take the divine Emilie in her stead!

It was during this visit, by the way, that Madame du Châtelet was confined, and a few days later, to the intense grief of Voltaire, died of milk-fever, having, in spite of remonstrances, insisted upon drinking a large tumbler of iced barley-water.

It was in June 1768 that the queen expired, and Louis XV., perhaps through a feeling of remorse, seems to have been deeply afflicted by her death. He approached the bed where the body was lying in order to embrace her inanimate remains. It was fondly hoped once more by the royal family that the king would renounce his wicked ways. He did make an effort in that direction, and according to Madame Adélaïde, the conversion of her father was sincere, and would have endured but for the evil counsels of his courtiers. However that may be, the queen had not been more than three months in her grave when the king took Madame du Barry for his mistress.

We shall now turn back for a moment to an important event which shortly preceded the death of Madame de Pompadour, and which was the work of one of her ministers—*la pacte de famille*.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FAMILY COMPACT.

THE treaty, called the *pacte de famille*,¹ which was to destroy the naval preponderance of England, was signed on the 15th August, 1761, between the Kings of France, of Spain, and of the two Sicilies, and the Duke of Parma, who united themselves in a perpetual alliance; and a separate and secret engagement was signed between France and Spain, by which the latter bound herself to declare war against England, if before 1st May, 1762, peace had not been concluded between Great Britain and France; and on the same day France was to hand over Minorca, which she had conquered, to Spain. Charles III., who, on the death of his brother Ferdinand VI., had quitted the throne of Naples for that of Spain, kept faith with France, and in fact declared war with England before the date originally fixed upon, having another insult to avenge.

Pitt appears to have been made acquainted with the conclusion of the secret treaty between the two

¹ There had previously been other family compacts, but the real *pacte de famille* was not signed until 1761.

great Bourbon houses before its signature by Marshal Keith. He urged that war should be declared against Spain at once, that England should anticipate the coming blow by capturing the treasure fleet from the Indies, by occupying the Isthmus of Panama, by attacking the Spanish dominions in the new world, that twelve seventy-four-gun ships should be sent to Cadiz, and that this opportunity for humbling the whole House of Bourbon should not be let slip; but all his colleagues, with the exception of Temple, rejected this daring plan, and Pitt and Temple resigned. It was soon to be proved that the policy advocated by Pitt was sound. Macaulay tells us that "soon after his resignation came the Lord Mayor's day. The king and the royal family dined at Guildhall. Pitt was one of the guests. The young sovereign seated by his bride in his state coach received a remarkable lesson. He was scarcely noticed. All eyes were fixed on the fallen minister. The streets, the balconies, the chimney-tops, burst into a roar of delight as his chariot passed by. The ladies waved their handkerchiefs from the windows. The common people clung to the wheels of his carriage, shook hands with the footmen, and even kissed the horses. Cries of 'No Bute!' 'No Newcastle salmon!' were mingled with shouts of 'Pitt for ever!' When Pitt entered Guildhall he was welcomed by loud huzzas and clapping of hands, in which the very magistrates of the city joined. Lord Bute, in the meantime, was hooted and pelted through Cheapside, and would, it

was thought, have been in some danger if he had not taken the precaution of surrounding his carriage with a strong body-guard of boxers. The events which immediately followed Pitt's retirement raised his fame higher than ever. War with Spain, as he had predicted, proved to be inevitable. News came from the West Indies that Martinique had been taken by an expedition which he had sent forth. Havannah fell, and it was known that he had planned an attack on Havannah. Manilla capitulated, and it was believed that he had meditated a blow against Manilla. . . ."

Wall, the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, an Irishman by birth, seems to have opposed the signing of the *pacte de famille* in vain. His remonstrances were overborne by the Duc de Choiseul, by the Duc d'Ossuna, the French ambassador at Madrid, and by Grimaldi, the Spanish ambassador at Versailles. No other Powers were to be admitted.

When the British Cabinet at last became aware of the danger of the situation, it requested communication of the *pacte*, and on this being refused it employed such peremptory language as to offend Spanish pride and bring matters to a crisis.

The first act of the Bourbon allies was to make a most unprovoked attack upon Portugal, in the hope of forcing that power to declare war against England. But this attack, successful at first, was destined to end in disaster, owing to bad weather and British aid.

In a very short time matters looked so gloomy for the family compact that the Duc de Nivernais was

sent to London to negotiate, while the Duke of Bedford repaired to Paris to treat directly with the Duc de Choiseul. France had to make up her mind to renounce all her possessions in American waters, with the exception of the Isles of St. Pierre and Miguelon, which were necessary for her cod-fishery, but which she was not to fortify. The French, too, were driven from India, where they were allowed to retain only Pondicherry, Mahé, and three small trading stations, to which she was to send no troops; and—crowning disgrace of all—they were to demolish once more the fortifications of Dunkirk on the side of the sea. The Spanish ambassador Grimaldi, in the hopes of something turning up, delayed negotiations, but when he heard that Havannah, instead of offering a successful resistance, as he hoped it would, had capitulated on the 12th August, he was obliged to submit to harder terms than those before offered.

The loss of Havannah was a terrible blow for Spain. The Baron de Besenval says in his *Memoirs* (t. i. p. 240) that M. de Wall, the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, hardly knew how to announce the capture of Havannah, especially to the king, for it was regarded by the nation as impregnable. M. de Wall confided his perplexity to M. de Bauteville, the French ambassador, who was on the point of leaving Madrid, and it was agreed to communicate the ill-tidings to his Majesty a few days later, when M. de Bauteville was to be received to take leave of the king. After the usual compliments had been exchanged at this audience,

M. de Wall suddenly said, "Sire, I have bad news to announce; the English have captured Havannah." The first impulse of the king was to utter a cry of grief and surprise, but then turning to M. de Bauteville he said, "Assure the king, my cousin, that I am quite ready to make even greater sacrifices for his service." It was in the interest of France alone that Spain took part in this war, which in no way concerned her, adds the Baron, and to engage her in it was one of those miracles which no one but the Duc de Choiseul could have performed.

In addition to Havannah, Spain lost Manilla, with the Philippine Islands; did not recover Minorca, and had to pay the expense of the attack upon Portugal, which had refused to draw the sword against heretical England. This was pretty well for ten months of war.

The House of Bourbon, being unable to continue the struggle, was not long in coming to terms. On the 5th November, 1762, the preliminaries of peace were signed at Fontainebleau, and were converted into a definite treaty, known as the Treaty of Paris, on the 10th February, 1763. France, conscious of having led Spain into a bad business, gave her Louisiana by way of compensation.

In 1770 the family compact again cropped up, and was on the point of producing another conflagration. The Duc de Choiseul and Grimaldi, still smarting under the shame of the treaty of Paris, had long been on the watch for an opportunity for revenge. The Spaniards had turned an English garrison out of Port

Egmont. In November 1770, the British Government called upon the Spanish Government to disavow the act of the governor who had committed this aggression, and to restore Port Egmont. Charles III. at once notified to France that in all probability he would soon have to claim the aid promised in the family compact. He at once began to prepare for hostilities, and ordered the Prince of Masserano, his ambassador in London, to gain time while he was awaiting the reply from France, which at that moment had some reason to complain of British arrogance. In fact, Lord Rochfort had just demanded that the French should withdraw from Corsica. Added to this the Duc de Choiseul had taken advantage of several years of peace to construct sixty vessels of the line and a large number of frigates, the crews being exercised on every possible occasion. The moment appeared well chosen for bringing the family compact into operation once more. The greatest difficulty which the Duc de Choiseul had to encounter, says Lacretelle, was to keep his projects and his hopes carefully concealed from Louis XV., who, brought up by Fleury in the fear of English power, shuddered at the idea of a third maritime war.

The Spaniards refused to disavow the conduct of Governor Bucarelli, and the French refused to evacuate Corsica, which they said had belonged to Genoa, and had been made over to them by that Republic. Spain called upon France for the support promised by the family compact, and Grimaldi received from

Choiseul the most positive assurances of assistance. Everything was prepared for letting slip the dogs of war, and Mr. Harris, afterwards Lord Malmesbury, then acting as resident minister at Madrid, was ordered to leave that capital. But at this critical moment Charles III. received a letter from Louis XV., written in his own hand, in which his French majesty said, "My minister desires war, I do not." The machinations of the Duc de Choiseul had been discovered just in time; he was driven from office, exiled to his country house of Chanteloup, and was succeeded by his most inveterate enemy, the Duc d'Aiguillon, whom we have met before as the *beau d'Agenois*, the lover of the Duchesse de Chateauroux, or rather of Madame de la Tournelle. We shall say something more of the Duc de Choiseul further on.

Ten years later another attempt was made to ruin England by means of the family compact; but fortunately for Great Britain, the Franco-Spanish machine did not work satisfactorily for the allies, although they chose their time well. England was engaged in war with America: in February 1778 France concluded a treaty with our revolted colonies, and Spain soon followed her example; the two Bourbon powers being encouraged to avenge the losses and humiliation of the Seven Years' War on learning the disaster which had overtaken General Burgoyne at Saratoga. It was hoped that Chatham would be able to recover the friendship of the colonies, and to baffle the efforts of France and Spain, but in

April Chatham died, exclaiming with his last breath—"Shall we fall prostrate before the House of Bourbon?" In addition to France and Spain and the American colonies, England had on her hands Holland and the Northern Courts, and the navy, once the dread of Europe, had been allowed to dwindle down until it was considered as hardly able to cope with that of France. It was therefore triumphantly argued that, with the addition of forty Spanish sail of the line, the House of Bourbon would be able to secure the sovereignty of the seas, or at least the mastery of the Channel, and that a French army fifty thousand strong, which had been concentrated along the Norman coast, could be landed in England. With a view to our destruction, Spain by previous agreement joined France in her war against England. On the 3rd June, d'Orvilliers hastened to Brest with thirty sail of the line, and thence proceeded to the Spanish coast, where he was to have been joined by Don Louis d'Arce with eight sail, but owing to a dispute about rank, the Spanish commander refused to answer the signals to put to sea. D'Orvilliers made for Cadiz, where however he was joined by thirty ships of the line, and in due time the whole force of sixty-eight sail, exclusive of frigates, &c., appeared in the Channel. "Never," says Coxe, "since the time of the Armada had the British Isles been threatened with so tremendous an armament, and seldom have they been so unequally prepared for a contest. Lulled into a dangerous security by the insidious professions of Spain, and

mainly confiding in the obvious interest of the Spanish monarch to discountenance the colonial revolt, the British Government made no preparation for defence adequate to the magnitude of the danger."

And there was some excuse for the British Government. Charles III., although he allowed himself to be dragged into the war, took a clearer view of the situation than Louis XVI. He did what he could to avoid fulfilling his engagement with France; he urged that if he aided the English colonies in their revolt, his own would throw off the yoke; he wished to negotiate, but all was in vain.

It was thought, and not without reason, that Louis XVI. would have had the same dread as Charles III. of playing with fire. A vigorous pamphlet was addressed to him from England, warning him of the wrath to come, and pointing out the danger of placing his most brilliant officers in communication with men fighting with enthusiasm for liberty. Louis XVI. followed the advice of Franklin and his ministers, and some people say that of the Duc de Choiseul, and declared war; and when peace came, his brilliant officers, his La Fayette, his Rochambeau, his de Noailles, and his Lameths, returned to sow the seeds of revolution in France, or at all events to help the people to reap the harvest.

Admiral Hardy could not muster more than thirty-eight sail to meet the combined fleet. A panic spread along the south coast, many persons flying inland. Happily the French and Spanish admirals could not

act together, and after ranging up and down the coast without bringing Admiral Hardy to action or throwing any troops ashore they returned to Brest, in time to escape the equinoctial gales, and with crews greatly debilitated by sickness, the only trophy of the Bourbon fleets being the *Ardent*, sixty-four, which mistook the enemy for the British fleet, and was captured.

But matters went very badly for England in this uneven struggle, and would have gone much worse but for the brilliant victories of Rodney, which saved her from being obliged to accept the humiliating terms which the Bourbons wished to impose. France demanded that we should withdraw from India ; Spain, that we should hand her over Gibraltar, which had successfully resisted a long siege by land and sea.

The French delight to relate that if Rodney saved us, we owed our escape to French generosity, in this way. Rodney, while the war was raging, was detained in Paris. Shortly after the defeat of Admiral Byron by d'Estaing, he was dining with Marshal Biron, at whose table he spoke in contemptuous terms of the successes of the French admirals, saying that if he were free he would soon give a good account of them. Upon this the gallant marshal paid Rodney's debts and said, "Go, sir, and try and keep your promises ; the French do not wish to take advantage of the obstacles which hinder you from accomplishing them." Very chivalrous this, but Rodney's debts were incurred in England in contesting Northampton. The English version of his appointment to the command of a fleet

is, that while living in Paris for the sake of economy, he refused certain offers made by the French Government which would have re-established his broken fortunes. If the French version be true, we can only say that the marshal must have felt some qualms of conscience when he learned how his quondam guest, after destroying the Spanish fleet at Cape St. Vincent, broke de Grasse's line in the West Indies, and captured his flag-ship and seven other vessels.

The victory of Rodney created a regular panic, which is thus described by Brun in his *History of the Naval Wars of France*¹—"The deplorable issue of the engagement of the Comte de Grasse afflicted France, who had expected better things, seeing how gloriously she had sustained the maritime struggle up to that moment; but at the same time it aroused her patriotism. Gifts of vessels were made on all sides. The two brothers of the king offered an eighty-gun ship. Burgundy, the commercial chambers of Paris, Lyons, and Bordeaux, each voted a vessel of one hundred and ten guns. The receivers-general, the farmers of the reveuue, and other bodies offered considerable sums. The generous gifts of the merchants of Marseilles amounted to £60,000 (equivalent to £100,000 to-day). . . ."

But if Rodney saved us from disgrace, from having to evacuate India and Gibraltar, we were obliged to make concessions to France in the East and the West Indies and on the coast of Africa, to

¹ t. ii. p. 57.

cancel the clause in the Treaty of Utrecht concerning Dunkirk, and to acknowledge her rights to fish on the banks of Newfoundland. Spain obtained Minorca and Florida, which she had given to us in exchange for Cuba, and America secured her independence.

So terminated the last family compact war, which cost France in round numbers £60,000,000.

Let us now turn back for a moment to an interesting episode which throws some light on the policy of Louis XV., at and after the date of the conclusion of the *pacte de famille*.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE D'EON AFFAIR.

A FEW years ago the Duc de Broglie, in examining his family papers, found an interesting document, which he thus described—

“It was in 1763, that is to say, almost at the moment of the peace, that the Comte de Broglie, although sharing the disgrace of his brother the marshal, proposed to draw up a general plan for a war with England. This was not done in a spirit of ambition, or with the view of disturbing that peace which the kingdom needed in order to repair its losses; he knew too well the principles of moderation and the good faith of his Majesty, and he was himself too deeply penetrated with those principles to lay before him plans at variance with them; but he knew that the king stored up in his heart the recollection of wrongs formerly committed by England.”

So, of course, principles and good faith were to be laid aside where there was an injury to be avenged, and when an opportunity offered itself.

To continue—

“Even the peace just concluded¹ showed the pre-

¹ Treaty of Paris.

tentions of that Power to the exclusive empire of the seas, and in the execution of the articles of that peace England behaved with an arrogance which too clearly revealed her intention to humiliate France, and to attack her again every time she sought to recuperate her marine. Never had it been more prudent to prepare for war while making peace.”

At first it was the past which was to be avenged at the price of principle and good faith, now it was the future which was to be guarded against—

“The experience of two disastrous naval wars, and the sagacity of the king’s judgment, had shown him that our reverses were chiefly caused by being forestalled by England, and never having a plan for opposing her. It was simply necessary to lay before the king a comparison of the resources of France and those of England to make him understand our enormous superiority when those resources were prepared and employed, and the advantage which France would obtain in a hand-to-hand fight instead of wasting her strength in distant expeditions. This reasoning induced his Majesty to embrace with ardour the idea of an invasion of England as the first blow to be struck at the commencement of a new war, the only one capable of effacing the regret felt for the peace just concluded, and of restoring the two crowns (of France and Spain) to the rank to which their real power in Europe entitled them.

“The plan, approved of by the king, was prepared in spite of all obstacles, and notwithstanding the

profound secrecy which had to be observed, for even the ministers were kept in ignorance of it. The work was accomplished with as much care as activity, and not as such works are ordinarily prepared, in the study, and on vague and uncertain speculations, but on the spot. Officers were sent to England; they recognized the possibility of an invasion, studied the points where a landing might be effected, the means of subsistence, the marches, the camps, the positions, and, in fact, all the operations possible as far as the other side of London. Then calculations and combinations were made upon our own coasts of all the means we possessed for executing the plan; the places where troops could be assembled, the ports best suited for embarking them, the number of ships which each could furnish, the rigging it was necessary to prepare, the artillery, the ammunition, the rations, the number and sort of soldiers necessary; everything, in fact, was done, even to calculating the winds and tides, together with the expenses and other matters tending to render success in the utmost degree probable.

“The Comte de Broglie did not confine himself to these speculations alone; to the principal expedition he united plans of diversion which were to be executed at the same time, by us and by Spain; he pointed out the secret and imperceptible measures which it would be necessary to take during the peace, so as to be ready to strike this great blow unexpectedly at the beginning of the war. He proposed a political plan for sapping the credit of England abroad.

“Such was the immense plan which the Comte de Broglie placed in the hands of the king. The prince did not take full advantage of his work. To have done this it would have been necessary for him to have dictated to his ministers the measures to be taken beforehand, either by letting them into the secret, as the Comte de Broglie begged him to do, or to have ordered those measures himself without revealing their object. But upon one hand he wished to conceal every trace of the report; on the other hand his sagacity, which was quick to perceive the best thing to be done, was unfortunately not, if one may dare to say so, always accompanied by the will to carry it into execution. Thus none of the preparatory measures indicated by the Comte de Broglie were taken, and even the marine, which was to be the principal basis of the scheme, remained in a state of lethargy.”

Such is the account given of the plan for the invasion of England submitted to Louis XV. a few weeks after the signing of the treaty of Paris—plan drawn up by the Comte de Broglie, who at that moment was in exile. The king approved of it, without any difficulty, on the 7th April, 1763, and wrote to the count—“I approve of the idea which you have communicated to Tercier,¹ to appoint at once a capable and intelligent officer to make the reconnaissances in England. Consequently I send you the enclosed order authorizing the Marquis de la Rozière to undertake

¹ Then at the head of the Secret Correspondence.

that duty. You must observe the greatest secrecy. . . Durand, Tercier, and d'Eon are the only persons I have admitted into the secret, their co-operation being necessary."

As the Comte de Broglie could not possibly superintend the preliminary measures from his retreat in the country, he had asked the king to confide that task to a gallant young officer, the Marquis de la Rozière, who had already done the State some service. Louis XV. consented, and the marquis was sent to England to spy out the land, with a salary of 1000 francs a month from the privy purse. Fearing that the presence of so distinguished an officer and frequent excursions along the Channel coast might arouse the suspicions of the British Government, it was determined never to leave in his hands any compromising documents. It was consequently deemed necessary to employ a secretary, whose duty it would be to convey verbal instructions to the Marquis de la Rozière, and to receive verbal reports. In an evil hour for all concerned in this plot, the Comte de Broglie pointed out the first secretary of the French embassy in London as a fit and proper person for this confidential post. The first secretary was the Chevalier d'Eon de Beaumont, of dubious sex, who had already been attached to several missions, and who was well acquainted with the mysterious dealings of Louis XV.¹ It was also considered that his

¹ D'Eon had been twice attached to the French embassy at St. Petersburg, where he had served sometimes in, sometimes out,

official position in London would admit of his carrying on correspondence with France, and communicate with Frenchmen visiting England, without awakening suspicion. Now the Comte de Broglie appears to have been intimately acquainted with the Chevalier, and the Duc de Broglie marvels how he could have conceived the idea of intrusting a secret of any importance to such a man, or woman.

The strange career of the Chevalier d'Eon is too well known to need comment, and we shall touch only upon the part he played in the great invasion scheme. He was enchanted with his mission, which was admirably suited to gratify his vanity, and enable him to display his peculiar talent for intrigue. The idea of treating directly with the king, of tricking ministers and ambassadors, and transacting State

of petticoats, and for five years had been employed in the secret correspondence carried on between Louis XV. and the empress. His prudence and activity were so highly appreciated by the king that he gave him a rich snuff-box with his portrait, made him secretary of the embassy, then a lieutenant of dragoons, and shortly afterwards a captain. When he had to leave Russia, owing to ill health, he was accorded a pension. He next distinguished himself in the field, and was then sent to London, where he served under the Duc de Nivernais, displaying such ability when the Treaty of Paris was negotiated, that he was rewarded with the order of St. Louis. He took the treaty over to Paris, and we find his return to London thus announced—

“M. d'Eon de Beaumont, secretary of the embassy from France, returned this day to London, and was received by the Duc de Nivernais as knight of the royal military order of St. Louis, his most Christian Majesty having invested him with that order when he presented to him the ratifications of the definitive treaty of peace with England.”—*Annual Register*, 30th March, 1763.

business unknown to them, and beneath their noses, was delightful to him. His correspondence was, of course, to be carried on in cipher, and in addition to this he proposed that he should call the king *l'avocat*; Tercier his *procureur*; the Comte de Broglie his *substitut*; Durand the *Prudent*; the Duc de Nivernais the *Mielleux*; the Duc de Praslin the *Amer*; the Duc de Choiseul the *Porcelaine*, or the *Lion Rouge*; while he himself was to figure as the *Intrepide*, or the *Tête de Dragon*.

Before operations commenced, the Duc de Nivernais, suffering from spleen caused by the fogs of London, retired, and was replaced by the Comte de Guerchy as French ambassador to the Court of St. James, and a hard time he had of it during his short official residence in England. On appointing him, the Duc de Praslin wrote to Nivernais, saying—"I am very anxious about poor Guerchy. I do not know if we are rendering him a service in appointing him ambassador to London. He is not liked in this country. I dread his despatches as I dread fire. You know how much despatches damage a man and his work when they are not well written. An ambassador is judged less by the manner in which he does his business than by the way in which he renders account of it. . . I think that our dear friend will do well . . . but he does not know how to write; we do not deceive ourselves on that matter. On the other hand, I would not like poor Guerchy to ruin himself, and I cannot give him more than 200,000 francs to commence with."

As Guerchy was a novice, and could not write, Nivernais suggested that he should have an auxiliary, and that Praslin should appoint d'Eon as resident. Praslin, who hated the Broglies, and who suspected d'Eon (not without good reason) of keeping up a correspondence with them, hesitated for awhile, but finally consented to the appointment, and the chevalier, who was shortly after named minister plenipotentiary, was ordered to repair to his post without delay. The same day he received from the king the following note, in his Majesty's handwriting—

“The Chevalier D'Eon will receive my orders through the channel of the Comte de Broglie, or M. Tercier, respecting the reconnaissances to make in England, either along the coasts or in the interior of the country, and will conform to his instructions on this subject as if coming direct from me. He must observe the most profound secrecy with regard to this affair, and not reveal it to any living soul, not even to my ministers, no matter where.”

From the Comte de Broglie the chevalier received detailed instructions.

D'Eon appears to have been intoxicated with his new position, and before the arrival of Guerchy we find him keeping “open house, and receiving French and English company like an ambassador in a small way. This affectation was all the more remarked because Frenchmen of distinction abounded in London during the first months which followed the re-establishment of peace. They hurried over as if on a voyage of discovery to visit that great country so little known, and so little understood up to that time, whose laws, customs, and literature had just been brought into fashion by

Voltaire and Montesquieu. It was a *furore* such as seizes upon Paris society at certain moments, and the idea of going to render homage to our conquerors did not deter a generation more taken with political and philosophical innovations than alive to the national honour.”¹

The Comte de Guerchy was highly irritated when he learned that the chevalier had assumed all the airs and importance of a real ambassador, and had been spending the embassy money, and it was in vain that d'Eon wrote and endeavoured to pacify him. The Duc de Praslin already regretted having appointed d'Eon, who was informed that his quality of resident, or plenipotentiary, would cease on the arrival of his superior, and that he would once more have to fall back to his old rank of secretary. The Duc de Nivernais and the Comte de Guerchy were instructed to break this decision to the chevalier, but the count's letter was so unhappily worded that it merely served to increase the vexation of d'Eon, and to inflict an additional wound on his vanity. The answer returned by d'Eon was so insolent that one would doubt of such a letter ever having been penned if the original did not exist in the French Foreign Office.

When Tercier and the Comte de Broglie were made aware of this squabble they trembled for their secret. They both wrote to d'Eon at considerable length; they appealed to his sense of duty, to his friendship,

¹ Duc de Broglie's *Secret du Roi*, t. xi. p. 122.

to his love and respect for the king; they implored him to make matters pleasant, and not to abandon the work he had taken in hand. The fact is, that both Tercier and the count perceived from the tone of d'Eon's correspondence that he was quite prepared to betray his master, if not for a few pieces of silver, for his own personal advantage, and to revenge what he perhaps rightly considered as an insult. To Tercier the chevalier addressed a singularly wild and violent reply, declaring that he was the victim of "infamies and diabolical injustice on the part of the inexorable sacrificators of public affairs, who formed a triumvirate of illustrious swindlers." He compared himself to David going out to do battle with Goliath of Gath, and roundly declared that he would not leave England until he had brought the work which the king expected from him to perfect maturity.

D'Eon having replied in a somewhat similar tone to a letter from the Foreign Minister, the Duc de Praslin asked the king to recall him, and to send Guerchy to London at once. His Majesty consented. The chevalier was directed to return to France, and to wait for further orders *without appearing at Court*. It was Guerchy who took the order over to London and handed it to his secretary. It is easy to imagine the wrath of d'Eon on receiving this harsh epistle. The fact of being abandoned by the king infuriated him to such a degree that it seems to have upset his intellect. A few days later, at a party given by Lord Halifax, the chevalier had a violent quarrel with one of his

countrymen called Vergy. In a letter to Lord Hertford, 25th November, 1763, Horace Walpole says—"D'Eon is still here. I know nothing of him but that the honour of having had a hand in the peace overset his poor brain. This was evident on the fatal night at Lord Halifax's; when they told him his behaviour was a breach of the peace, he was quite distracted, thinking it was the peace between his country and this."¹

Being of a gay and genial disposition, d'Eon had made many friends in England, and the queen appears to have been charmed with his conversational powers. The new ambassador was a person of quite another stamp, and the contrast between the two was certainly not in favour of the latter—at least at first. Counting on the support of English society, and the protection of English laws, the chevalier conceived the daring idea of forcing Louis XV. to capitulate.

While waiting for the day fixed for his audience to take leave of the King of England, all sorts of visions are said to have troubled his brain, "sick with pride and anger." On the 28th October he dined at the embassy, in company with the Comtesse de Guerchy

¹ Walpole also wrote as follows to Sir H. Mann—"You have seen some mention in the papers of M. d'Eon, who, from secretary to M. de Nivernais became plenipotentiary—an honour that turned his brain. His madness first broke out upon one Vergy, an adventurer, whose soul he threatened to put into a certain vessel and make him drink it. His rage was carried so far one night at Lord Halifax's that he was put under arrest. Being told that his conduct was a breach of the peace," &c.—12th December, 1763.

and her daughter ; after dinner he fell into a state of lethargy, and had great difficulty in getting home. He either thought, or pretended to think, that he had been poisoned. Convinced that he was to be assassinated and robbed of his secret, he took refuge in the middle of the night in the house of the Marquis de la Rozière, who was terrified at his appearance. He informed the marquis of the danger which menaced the secret of the king, and begged him to start for France with the compromising documents. La Rozière at once set out for Versailles, but d'Eon handed him over only a few of his notes, keeping in his possession the letter of Louis XV., and the detailed instructions of the Comte de Broglie. With these two weapons in his hands he informed the Comte de Guerchy that he was beyond his power, that he intended to remain in London in spite of his orders, that he had no intention of presenting his letters of recall to George III., that he would have no further dealings with the embassy, and would furnish no account of the money he had drawn while acting as resident.

The consternation of de Guerchy may be imagined, for in addition to the king's secret the chevalier had in his possession a number of other documents belonging to the embassy, the publication of which would have been exceedingly disagreeable.

However, neither the French ambassador nor the French ministers felt half so uneasy as the French king, who found himself at the tender mercy of a person whom he now considered half maniac, half

traitor. In his alarm Louis XV. unbosomed himself to the Comte de Guerchy, in the hope that he would be able to recover the papers which compromised him personally.

It would take long to recount all the devices employed to induce d'Eon to give up his papers, or to go to Versailles to lay his complaints before the king; but neither threats, nor flattery, nor persuasion had any effect upon him. He made demands so extravagant that they could not be listened to. He wished to have Guerchy recalled, and to reign in his stead; he shut himself up in his house, he, his cousin, and his servants, all armed to the teeth, not being aware of the axiom that an Englishman's house is his castle, and that beyond the precincts of the French embassy he was entitled to the privileges of a Briton. The French Government demanded the chevalier's extradition. The question was laid before the Privy Council in England, and was unanimously rejected. George III. informed Guerchy of the result, excusing himself personally on the ground of the little power which the law had left in his hand. Lord Halifax pronounced the conduct of d'Eon as execrable, but his person as inviolable. The only satisfaction which the French Government could obtain was the insertion of a note in the *London Gazette*, stating that on the demand of the French king the King of England had forbidden the Chevalier d'Eon to appear at Court. As for Guerchy, he had to admit that he could do nothing. The king was in a state of anguish. It was not a

question of a Court intrigue, the revelation of which might cause his Majesty some annoyance; it was a State secret which might, if revealed, kindle a sanguinary war between two nations, to the detriment of France, which was in an exhausted condition. What would the English cabinet say, what would the whole British nation—already irritated that its ministers had not imposed harder conditions the year before—say, on learning that the King of France himself, on the morrow of a treaty guaranteed by his word as a gentleman, and signed with his royal seal, was already preparing, through the intermediary of obscure spies, for the invasion of England? ¹

Louis XV. consulted the Comte de Broglie, and the count gave it as his opinion that it was highly impolitic for Guerchy and Praslin to drive d'Eon into a corner, to threaten him with the wrath of the king, and to treat him as a madman who ought to be shut up in Bedlam. "If through vengeance, or in order to procure a living," wrote the Count to Louis XV. on the 6th December, 1763, "he were to publish the order of your Majesty, which he has in his possession, or if he were to communicate it to the English ministers, what misfortunes might occur? Might not the sacred person of your Majesty be compromised, and would not a declaration of war on the part of England be inevitable?" The Count advised that the French ambassador should be ordered to leave d'Eon alone, and that one of the chevalier's friends should be sent

¹ De Broglie, *Secret du Roi*, t. xi. p. 154.

to England with an order from the king, couched in affectionate terms, directing him to return, and assuring him of the royal protection. The king, finding himself in an awkward position, allowed three months to pass before he came to a decision. How could he despatch an agent to England without confiding in the Duc de Praslin, and what excuse could he offer for dealing leniently with a rebel subject? In due time, however, M. de Nort, who had served with d'Eon in Russia, was despatched to London with orders for Guerchy. The ambassador was to humour d'Eon for a while, and was to find out for what pecuniary advantages he would part with the compromising documents in his possession.

M. de Nort reached London at the beginning of April, and found court, embassies, and town talking of nothing but d'Eon and a book which he had just published containing his private correspondence with the Duc de Praslin, the Duc de Nivernais, and the Comte de Guerchy, accompanied by extracts from letters which had passed between those distinguished persons.¹ There was some method, however, in d'Eon's madness; he said never a word of the royal

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WALPOLE TO LORD HERTFORD.

“27th March, 1764.

“D'Eon has published a most scandalous quarto, abusing M. de Guerchy outrageously, and most offensive to Praslin and Nivernais. D'Eon, even by his own account, is as guilty as possible, mad with pride, insolent, abusive, ungrateful, and dishonest; in short, a complication of abominations, yet originally ill-used by his Court. . . .”

secret, or of the other official documents which he had purloined. These he held in reserve.

M. de Nort arrived, therefore, at a most unfortunate moment. It seemed hopeless to think of effecting a reconciliation at such a juncture. Guerchy was doing all in his power to have d'Eon locked up and his book destroyed; he was endeavouring to obtain justice from ministers,¹ and was taking the advice of the first legal authorities in England.¹

At this moment everything appeared favourable for d'Eon. He had the people on his side; he was popular because ministers were unpopular, and because it was the general opinion that he knew facts concerning the peace with France which the government was anxious to keep in the dark, and which, if revealed, would be sure to bring Pitt back to office. Then his case was mixed up with that of Wilkes and Liberty. The people toasted them together. Wilkes was to be prosecuted for a violent attack on the person of the sovereign, and the Attorney-General had filed an information against d'Eon for libel against the representative of the French king. Wilkes pretended that the privileges of Parliament

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WALPOLE TO SIR C. CHURCHILL.

“27th March, 1764.

“M. de Guerchy is adored here, and will find so, particularly at this juncture, when he had been most cruelly and publicly insulted by a mad but villainous fellow, one d'Eon. . . The Council have met to-day to consider how to avenge Guerchy and to punish d'Eon. I hope a legal remedy is in their power.

“27th March, 1764.”

had been violated in his person. D'Eon contended that as a foreigner he could not be prosecuted for a libel. Wilkes sought refuge in France, while d'Eon hid himself in London. D'Eon, by the way, had curious notions concerning English law ; he suspected that it was the intention of the French government to kidnap him, and he wrote letters to Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, to Lord Bute, to Lord Temple, and to Pitt, to ask them if he would not be justified in killing any one who attempted to arrest him.

D'Eon was taken up by the liberal press, which condemned the prosecution of a foreigner who had entrusted himself to the protection of English laws ; it was loud in its complaints about England's ancient hospitality being sullied. The Opposition, too, made capital out of this affair, and the chevalier wrote to Tercier, saying that he had been offered any sum he liked to name for the papers in his possession. He added, however—"I will never abandon my king and my country the first ; but if, by misfortune, the king and my country deem fit to abandon me, I shall be obliged, in spite of myself, to abandon them the last. . . This sacrifice will be very hard for me, I admit ; it will also cost France dear, and this idea alone makes me weep. . . . I shall be forced to clear my character in the opinion of the King of England, of his ministers, of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, and we must make up our minds for a war of which I shall certainly be the innocent cause. This conflict will be inevitable, for the King

of England will be forced into war by the cry of the nation."

This was a tolerably clear way of telling Louis XV. that he must have money for his papers; but at the same time the chevalier declared that he would come to no terms until Guerchy had been removed from his post as ambassador.

In due time the action for libel brought by the French ambassador was tried. In the *Annual Register* we find the following entry—

"July 9th, 1764, came on, by information, the trial of the Chevalier d'Eon, lately plenipotentiary of the Court of France, for a supposed libel against the present French ambassador, before a special jury of the county of Middlesex, in the King's Bench, Westminster; when the defendant, not thinking proper to make any defence, was found guilty."¹

When the police searched his lodgings, neither the chevalier nor his papers could be found. Although he remained concealed, d'Eon had the audacity to carry the war into the enemy's camp. He brought a criminal action against the Comte de Guerchy for attempting to poison him a year before. And the person upon whose testimony he chiefly relied was

¹ "The Sieur d'Eon, who in last Trinity term was found guilty of printing a false and scandalous libel highly reflecting on the honour of the Comte de Guerchy, having absconded from justice, and not surrendered himself to the Court of King's Bench to receive judgment for the said offence, was declared to be outlawed by the judgment of the coroners of the county of Middlesex." *London Gazette*.—*Annual Register*, 13th June, 1765.

none other than the Sieur Treysac de Vergy, with whom the Chevalier had had the violent quarrel at the house of Lord Halifax. Vergy was a needy adventurer, who had been employed by de Guerchy to watch d'Eon, and who, considering that his services were insufficiently remunerated, had gone over to the enemy. Horace Walpole thus refers to this matter—"Vergy his antagonist is become his convert; has wrote for him and sworn for him,—nay, has made an affidavit before Judge Wilmot, that M. de Guerchy had hired him to stab or to poison d'Eon. . . . The story is as clumsy as it is abominable. The King's Bench cited d'Eon to receive his sentence, he absconds; that Court issued a warrant to search for him, and a house in Scotland Yard where he lodged was broken open, but in vain. . . ."

HORACE WALPOLE TO LORD HERTFORD.

"25th November, 1764.

"Guerchy's case, *cause commune*, and the Attorney-General has filed an information against d'Eon; that poor lunatic was at the Opera on Saturday, looking like Bedlam. He goes armed, and threatens what I dare say he would perform, to kill or be killed if any attempt be made to seize him.

"20th April, 1764."

The Comte de Guerchy was astounded at the wickedness of this accusation, which made him "shudder with horror." He thought, however, as he wrote to the Duc de Praslin, that the fact of appearing before the judge himself, in spite of his privilege as an ambassador, would be sufficient to put an end to all proceedings; that the judge would

believe the word of an honest man, and dismiss the charge. The Comte de Guerchy was very much mistaken.

At this juncture the Comte de Broglie offered to go to London and obtain the compromising papers from d'Eon. The fact is, that he was alarmed about his own position. If matters came to the worst, he knew that the king was quite capable of sacrificing him to the wrath of his ministers, and he had no desire to be thrown into the Bastille. He not only proposed to go to England, he suggested to the king that in exchange for his papers a promise of 12,000 francs a year should be made to d'Eon, and he offered to give the chevalier a mortgage for that sum on his own estates. Louis XV. accepted, and without a blush consented that one of his subjects should pledge his property as a guarantee for his royal word. D'Eon, when informed of this arrangement, also agreed to accept it under certain conditions, one of which was that the mortgage should extend to the property of the Comtesse de Broglie! He considered neither the king's word nor the security offered by his friend, the Comte de Broglie, as sufficient.

Louis XV. was in a sad dilemma. How justify in the eyes of his ministers the departure of a person so important as the count? His Majesty put off coming to a decision from week to week, and before he could make up his mind on the matter the grand jury of Middlesex found a true bill against Claude Louis François Regnier, Comte de Guerchy, who, being of

an evil disposition, not having the fear of God before his eyes, and instigated by the demon, had wickedly endeavoured to persuade Pierre Henry Trayssac de Vergy to murder Charles Geneviève Louis Auguste André Timothée d'Eon de Beaumont.

This verdict seems to have taken London by surprise. The Comte de Guerchy lost his presence of mind, and was under the impression that he would at once be arrested; nor was he greatly reassured when Horace Walpole declared that the accusation would break down, and that he would merely have to reply that if he had offered Vergy money to commit a murder the scamp would not have refused it. As for the *maître d'hôtel* who was accused of having poured the poisoned wine into the chevalier's glass, seized with terror he fled the country, although he was on the eve of being married.

D'Eon was jubilant. He wrote to the Comte de Broglie that he must come over at once and settle matters; he added—"This is the last letter which I shall have the honour of writing to you on the subject of that poisoner and scoundrel Guerchy, who would be broken alive on the wheel in France if justice were done there. But, thank God, he will simply be hung in England, as the Count de Sea was in the time of Cromwell."

The affair, as may well be supposed, made a great noise at Versailles and in Paris. Hume, who was then paying a visit to the French capital, was assailed with questions as to the privileges enjoyed by ambassadors.

The Comte de Broglie, in a letter to the king, dated the 22nd March, 1765,¹ told his Majesty that having expressed the opinion that an ambassador could not be made amenable to any other justice than that of his master, the English historian had replied that the laws of England were invariable on the subject, and that the authority of his Britannic Majesty would be unable to change them.

However, an appeal was made to the Court of King's Bench against the verdict, and in virtue of a writ of error the Attorney-General was ordered not to prosecute on the finding of the grand jury, and the affair remained in suspense.

This way of shielding the French ambassador created a great ferment in London. The Attorney-General protested against the case being taken out of his hands. Poor Guerchy narrowly escaped being torn to pieces by the mob. His windows were broken, and for several days neither he nor his family dared to venture abroad. The Opposition journals indignantly denied the right of the king to shelter the ambassador from the regular course of justice, and Lord Chesterfield expressed doubts in one of his letters to Philip Stanhope,² as to the legality of the king's act.

After much negotiation d'Eon at last consented to come to terms, and Durand, formerly minister at Warsaw, who had been sent over to London instead

¹ Secret Correspondence—Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

² Letter 352, April 22, 1765.

of the Comte de Broglie to treat with the chevalier, was able to announce this happy issue to the king. In his report he described how "the secret of the king, written and signed with his own hand, dated 5th June, 1763, and addressed to the *Sieur d'Eon*," had been handed to him in good condition after having been taken out of a brick which formed part of the foundation of the cellar.

In exchange for his Majesty's letter Durand handed the following document to *d'Eon*—

"As recompense for the services which the *Sieur d'Eon* rendered me in Prussia, with my armies, and on other occasions, I desire to insure him a salary of 12,000 livres a year, to be paid quarterly in any country where he may reside, except in time of war in the country of my enemies, and until I deem it expedient to give him a post the pay of which shall be larger than the present pension.

"LOUIS."

And beneath this Durand added—

"I, undersigned, minister plenipotentiary of the king to this Court, certify upon my honour and oath that the above promise is really written and signed by the king, my master, and that he ordered me to hand it to the Chevalier *d'Eon*.

"DURAND."

As far as Louis XV. and his share in the invasion scheme were concerned, the *d'Eon* affair was over, and his Majesty heard little or nothing more of a matter which at one time wore so threatening an aspect. As for the Comte de Guerchy, he shortly afterwards returned to France and died, his end being hastened by all the mortification he had suffered during his short embassy to England. *D'Eon* remained in London; he had handed over the king's letter to



BEAUMARCHAIS PROPOSES TO THE CHEVALIER D'EON.

Durand, but he had kept a number of other official documents, which made it advisable for the French Government not to drive him to despair. These he retained in his possession until Louis XVI. ascended the throne, when Beaumarchais was sent over to London to conclude a second bargain. D'Eon completely duped the author of the *Mariage de Figaro*, persuading him with tears in his eyes that he was a poor wronged woman, and such was the impression he made that Beaumarchais proposed marriage!

To make a long story short, on the 5th October, 1775, an agreement was arrived at between this strange pair, and an official document set forth that —“ We, the undersigned, Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, acting specially on the orders of the King of France, and *demoiselle* Charles Geneviève Louise Auguste André Timothée d'Eon de Beaumont, *fille majeure*, known up to this day as the Chevalier d'Eon, equerry, formerly captain of dragoons, knight of the royal and military order of St. Louis, aide-de-camp to Marshal and to Comte de Broglie, minister plenipotentiary of France to the King of Great Britain, formerly doctor of civil and canon law, advocate to the Parliament of Paris, royal censor for history and *belles-lettres*, sent to Russia with the Chevalier Douglas to bring about the union of the two Courts; we have agreed upon what follows—”

All the papers bearing upon the secret correspondence were to be given up. D'Eon was to refrain from all personal or political attacks on the memory

of the late Comte de Guerchy. And as it was feared that the count's son might kill d'Eon and create a scandal, "His Majesty exacts that the disguise which has hitherto concealed a woman under the appearance of the Chevalier d'Eon shall cease entirely." In fact, d'Eon was to have a safe conduct to return to France in petticoats, was to enjoy her pension, and to receive a large sum of money down, the amount of which does not appear.

D'Eon consented to "declare publicly her sex," always to wear women's clothes, and even to go into a convent! Beaumarchais argued her case with such warmth that the *chevalière* was not obliged to part with her cross of St. Louis, and was allowed to keep, as a souvenir of old times, the uniform of the regiment of dragoons in which she had served—"helmet, sabre, pistols, and musket with bayonet." With these she afterwards wished to serve in America during the War of Independence, but the French Government refused her application. She then wanted to serve under the Comte d'Orvilliers on board ship; she had fought on land, and wished to fight at sea. And she so pestered Maurepas for permission to divest herself of her petticoats in time of war, that she was ordered to go and reside at her native town of Tonnerre in petticoats, and for not obeying this order she was sent to prison at Dijon, where, however, she did not long remain. What need we say more beyond this—that she returned to England, where Horace Walpole saw her several times, and judging by her arms,

thought that she was more fit to carry a chair than a fan. In a letter to Miss Berrys, 4th September, 1789, he said—"You may perceive that I have been dipping into Spenser again; there I lighted upon two lines that at first sight reminded me of Madame d'Eon—

‘Now, when Marfisa had put off her beaver,
To be a woman every one perceive her’—

but I don't think that so perceptible in the *chevalière*. She looked more feminine, as I remember her, in regimentals, than she does now. She is at best a hen-dragon. I wonder she does not make a campaign in her own country, and offer her sword to the almost-dethroned monarch as a second Joan of Arc."

When d'Eon died at the ripe old age of eighty-three the doctors declared that he was of the masculine gender; he had lived forty-nine years of his life as a man, and thirty-four as a woman, and his requiem was a *bon mot* by Lord Mount Edgumbe, who said that d'Eon was his own widow.

But what became of the plan of campaign, which had caused so much trouble, and of the Comte de Broglie? When France determined to help America against the mother country, and declared war with England, the heart of the count beat high. He visited the naval ports along the Channel coast, and deluged the Admiralty with maps, reports, and statistics. Great was his delight when he learned from the Duc de Chartres, who was down in Brittany on duty, that a camp was to be formed at Cotentin,

where 60,000 men were to be assembled with the view of embarking for England, if an expedition were deemed possible. Marshal de Broglie was to command the invading force, but no appointment was offered to the count, who thought that he would have been named chief of the staff. Instead of this he was given a post inland, a hundred leagues from any sea-coast ! What the feelings of the Comte de Broglie were may be easily imagined. He persuaded his brother to lay down his command, and he himself did not long survive the blow. The Duc de Broglie tells us that the count died in 1781, expressing the same regret as Colbert, that he had not served God as he had served his king and country. As for the invasion, it fell through, as we have mentioned in our sketch of the Family Compact.



MADAME DU BARRY.

CHAPTER XV.

MADAME DU BARRY.

A GREAT deal has recently been written about Madame du Barry, whose character has not suffered by close investigation. M. Charles Vatel has devoted three volumes to her, and has fought her battle fairly and well, not hiding her faults nor setting down aught in malice. He refuses to call her either *Madame la Comtesse* or *la Dubarry*, as she had no claim to the title of countess and no right to be insulted with the epithet of "the." In his preface, M. Vatel says—"The eighteenth century has left us a ready-made legend concerning Madame du Barry—origin, genealogy, morals, adventures, the most secret and intimate details, nothing is wanting but a little truth. Instead of romance it is time to listen to the language of history."

M. Vatel then tells us how the name of the last mistress of Louis XV. was mixed up with the downfall of the Duc de Choiseul, the exile of the Parliament, the partition of Poland, with the Duc d'Aiguillon, M. de Maupeou, and the Abbé de Terray, all which men and things were caricatured and enveloped in

the same reprobation which covered the name of the favourite.

M. Vatel does not agree with those historians who consider that during the last five years of the reign of Louis XV., France sank to her lowest pitch of immorality; that, he thinks, had been reached before the advent of Madame du Barry, and he is not far wrong; the most objectionable fact against "the scarlet woman," as Carlyle so lightly calls her, was the lowness of her origin. Other mistresses were quite as immoral before they shared the royal favour and afterwards. We are also reminded that most of the other courts of Europe, at the period in question, were schools for scandal. There was Catherine the Great, not celebrated for her virtue; Augustus of Poland, "the paternal man of sin," whose bastards were innumerable; the King of Spain, who had twenty-three; the King of Portugal, who lived openly with an abbess;¹ the King of Naples, who had his "Deer Park," not to mention other smaller but not less immoral courts.

M. Vatel publishes a fac-simile of the certificate of Madame du Barry's birth, showing that she was the natural daughter of a woman called Bécu; her christian name was Jeanne, she was born the 19th August, 1743, and her father is supposed to have been a monk of the name of Jean Jacques Gomard, in religion Frère Ange. After giving birth to another child, Anne Bécu, who lived at Vaucouleurs,

¹ *Memoires de Bezenval*, t. i. p. 99.

went to Paris, and in 1749 married a servant called Nicolas Rançon.

At a very early age Jeanne Bécu seems to have been placed at the convent of Sainte Aure, where she received a tolerable education, and where she remained until she was fifteen years old. Her spelling and her grammar were afterwards ridiculed, but in those days few ladies knew how to write correctly; *les grandes dames* who reproached Richelieu with his infidelities wrote—*Vous ne mémé plu.*

“With the exception of the letters addressed to Sir Henry Seymour (with whom she fell in love after the death of Louis XV.), and which appear to have been dictated by an ardent passion,” says M. Vatel, “her style is dull, or, as she called it, *terre-à-terre*. What must be borne in mind is, that she received and retained a certain amount of intellectual culture which could only have been acquired at Sainte Aure.” And we are told that she read Cicero, Demosthenes, and had a real taste for Shakespeare, translated of course,¹ that she had dipped into Voltaire, was able to express her opinion with regard to Lovelace and to Nero, whose cruelties she considered to have been exaggerated. She knew how to draw, understood housekeeping, and never entirely forgot the religious instruction which she had received at her convent.

On leaving Sainte Aure we find Jeanne Bécu learning to dress hair, next companion to a lady or lady’s-maid, and then in a bonnet shop, where pretty

¹ When in England she bought an English edition.

girls were exposed to endless temptations. That she fell was true, but that she became a woman of the lowest class, as her enemies asserted, is shown to have been false. Had such been the case, her name would have appeared in the police sheets, where M. Vatel has searched for it in vain. He tells us the name of the hair-dresser and where his shop was situated, the name of the lady into whose service Jeanne Bécu entered, and the name of the *marchand de modes* in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, where she was apprenticed on leaving Madame de la Garde. In fact, he seems to have ransacked every source of information with the greatest diligence, and to have come to the conclusion that most of the tales afterwards related in verse and prose concerning the early life of Madame du Barry are calumnies.

When about twenty years of age, Jeanne Rançon, as she was usually called, and sometimes Mademoiselle Lange, after her supposed father,¹ assumed the name of Vaubernier, and shortly afterwards fell in with the *Comte* Jean du Barry, nicknamed the *Roué*.

¹ Walpole in a letter to Sir Horace Mann dated

“2nd December, 1768.”

“ . . . Your neighbour Paoli goes on grinding the French to powder. The Duc de Choiseul has a still worse enemy at home. There is a Mademoiselle L’Ange, now Countess de Barré (*sic*), who has mounted from the dregs of her profession to the zenith of it, and gained an ascendant that all the duchesses and beauties of Versailles could not attain. Her husband has long been the pimp of Richelieu, and married this nymph in order to pave her way to favour. She gets ground every day, and probably will save Paoli before my Lord Chatham steps in to his assistance.”

M. Vatel says that Jean du Barry had no right to the title of count, but that he belonged to an old and noble family which had done the State some service. The French branch could trace its origin back to the year 1400, and that branch is supposed to have come from Ireland, descendants of Barrymore, lords of Buttevant, which town derived its name from the old French device *Boutez-en-avant*.¹

HORACE WALPOLE TO SIR HORACE MANN.

"11th May, 1769.

"I forgot to tell you that the Comte de Barry, who has been acknowledged by Lord Barrymore as a relation, insists on calling himself by that title. He was reported to be dead. The Duc de Chartres said, 'C'est pour nous prouver qu'il est véritablement Comte de Barry-mort.'"

Jean du Barry was born in 1723; when twenty-five years old he married "a handsome and honest person who had nothing to say to the disgraceful conduct of her husband." Two years after his marriage the *Roué* left his wife and repaired to Paris, where his ready wit

Walpole, be it mentioned, was a friend, if not of the Duc de Choiseul, of the duchess and the Choiseul party, Madame du Deffand, &c., and said that he hated Madame du Barry and her faction.

¹ The first Barry-More, after numerous brilliant exploits, was slain at Lismore in 1185. He was succeeded by his brother, the father of the first lord of Buttevant. The seventh Earl of Barrymore was born in 1769, and according to Sir Egerton Brydges, "his freaks would have disgraced Buckingham or Rochester." He was killed by his musket accidentally exploding while conveying some French prisoners from Folkestone to Dover in 1793. He left no issue, and was succeeded by his brother, the eighth and last earl, who died in 1824.—Burke's *Dormant and Extinct Peerages*.

was highly appreciated. He entered the diplomatic career and was employed in Germany. Jean du Barry was not rich, but on his return to Paris he managed to obtain a contract to furnish provisions to the French army in Corsica, and his coffers were soon replenished. He made the acquaintance of Jeanne Vaubernier, came to terms with Monsieur and Madame Rançon, and took Jeanne for his mistress. He gratified her extravagant tastes in the way of dresses and covered her with diamonds.

As a proof that Madame du Barry was not the vulgar woman she has been represented, we are told that she was on intimate terms with the Countess La Rena, who had lived for seven years with Lord March, afterwards Duke of Queensberry, and that neither the countess nor his lordship would have tolerated a woman of low tastes and given to the use of disreputable language.¹ Numerous proofs of this intimacy are to be found in the letters of Horace Walpole, who, years afterwards, in describing a reception at Queensberry House, where the Comtesse de Boufflers played on the harp, and the Princess of Castel-Cicala danced a *pas* with her husband, said—"Madame du Barry was also present, and I had a long conversation with her on the subject of the late Duc de Choiseul." At a later date old Q. presented

¹ On April 14th, 1769, Horace Walpole wrote to Sir Horace Mann, asking him to be civil to the Contessa Rena, who had been presented at an Austrain court, and had "lain" at Strawberry, *en tout bien et honneur*.

Madame du Barry to the King of England on the terrace of Windsor.¹

When living with the *Roué*, Madame du Barry saw, no doubt, society which was good in its way. Jean du Barry was on intimate terms with the Prince de Ligne, with the dukes of Richelieu, Nivernais, and Duras. Lord March, writing to Selwyn, 3rd December, 1766, said—"I have received a letter from Jordina (La Rena); she tells me that she never had such a good time in Paris before, that 'Monsieur du Barry is a charming man, who gives us balls with princesses,'"—no doubt princesses of the *demi-monde*.

We remark at this time that Jeanne Bécu, after adopting the name of Bauvernier, became Vaubernier, which was considered more aristocratic; that she had her carriage, and never went out on foot; also that she was suspected of not having been faithful to her protector. She was reported to have given her affections, among others, to Monsieur de Sainte Foy, who was chief secretary in the Foreign Office under the Duc de Choiseul, and who always denied the soft impeachment. However that may be, when Madame du Barry became the mistress of Louis XV., that monarch is said to have observed to the Duc de Noailles—"I am aware that I succeed Monsieur de Sainte Foy," upon which the witty courtier replied—"Just as your Majesty succeeds Pharamond."

The story of how Louis XV. met Madame du Barry is pleasant enough. The *Roué* wanted to be

¹ See p. 431.

paid for his Corsican contract, but as he was not in the good graces of the Duc de Choiseul, to whom it was necessary to apply, he thought that it would be good policy to send Mademoiselle Vaubernier to plead his cause. In this way the future favourite, and the minister whose downfall she was afterwards said to have accomplished, were brought into contact. In this way also she attracted the attention of Louis XV.

The irascible little Duc de Choiseul did not find Mademoiselle Vaubernier to his taste, thought her wanting in grace, indifferently pretty and countrified, and consequently, as he says in his *Memoirs*, he sent her on to Monsieur Foulon, the Foulon destined to meet so cruel a fate during the Revolution.

It was while trying to arrange this matter for the *Roué*, and going from one ministry to the other, that the king first saw Mademoiselle Vaubernier, and being smitten with her charms, told his valet, Le Bel, to find out who she was. His Majesty, says d'Argenson, was accustomed at this period to keep a sharp look-out, and to "throw his handkerchief" at any pretty girl or woman he happened to see at mass, or elsewhere.

Without going fully into details, we may state that Mademoiselle Vaubernier changed hands, and that she was made over by Jean du Barry to Louis XV. for so many pieces of silver; at least the *Roué* was compensated. But as the new favourite was to be a "declared mistress," and as his Majesty had decided that there should be no second Madame de Maintenon,

and as it was also considered proper that she should be a woman of title, so as to be able to appear at Court and to ride in the king's carriages, it seems to have been part of the bargain that she should be married. Alas, the *Roué* could not marry the lady, because his wife, whom he had deserted at Toulouse, was still in the flesh. Fortunately he had a brother, William, who consented to wed his mistress. In the marriage contract he is styled, Guillaume, Comte du Barry, Captain of Marines, while his bride is described as Jeanne *Gomard* de Vaubernier,¹ a minor (though she was twenty-four years old). It was also set down in the contract that husband and wife should live separately, and that the former should pay half the expenses of the education of any children born of their marriage! The religious ceremony was performed at the church of St. Laurent, on the 1st September, 1768, at five a.m., to avoid publicity. All the documents connected with this marriage were falsified, and in those days to tamper with documents

¹ Bachaumont tells the following anecdote—

“15th October.—A *bon mot* by the Duc de Choiseul *à propos* to Madame du Barry is reported. It is well known that although this lady was born in holy wedlock, her real father was the Abbé Gomar—a report which has gained ground seeing the great care which the countess takes of the abbé. The conversation turned upon monks, and the advisability of their destruction in France. Madame du Barry attacked them, while the Duc de Choiseul took their defence. After a long discussion, at a loss for arguments, the duke said—‘You will at least admit, Madame, that they know how to make handsome children.’ As the epigram contained a compliment, it was allowed to pass.”

in order to deceive the king was a crime which was punished by death preceded by torture, by being stretched on the rack or broken on the wheel.

The king appears to have been thoroughly deceived with regard to the quality of the goods he purchased, and that is the only excuse for his subsequent behaviour. Had he been acquainted with the real origin of the Comtesse du Barry, would he ever have installed her at Versailles and forced her society upon his daughters?

From the first moment of her appearance at Court, the Duc de Choiseul exhibited the greatest hostility to the new favourite. In his *Memoirs*, written at Chanteloup, after his fall, like those of the great minister of Henri IV. written at Sully, he gave full vent to the bitterness of his soul. He wrote—"At first no one could believe in so infamous a scandal, because no one understood the king. The weakness of his mind, his timid air which had a good deal of stupidity in it, his handsome face which wore the appearance of decency, his age, the example he owed to his children, the marriage of his grandson, all conduced to throw discredit on the rumour that he contemplated an act so despicable as that of the presentation of a woman supposed to be married to the infamous brother of a man who kept a public school of cheating and prostitution in Paris. In spite of the poor opinion I have of the king, I do not think that he would have indulged in so indecent an action had he not been encouraged by Marshal Richelieu,

who, unfortunately for the Court and for France, was gentleman-in-waiting at the time. . . .”

The Duc de Choiseul might have earned the gratitude of his country had he opposed, when minister, the proclivities of the king in a proper manner, and not condescended to employ means both petty and deplorable. He must have been well acquainted with the antecedents of the favourite, and he might have laid a statement of the case before Louis XV. ; but instead of adopting this simple plan, he allowed Madame du Barry to be lampooned in the most vile and scandalous manner ; no stories were too indecent and too false for the chroniclers and writers of epigrams who enjoyed his confidence, no pamphlets or satires could cover the favourite with sufficient ignominy. Not only this, but he tried to set up a rival in the shape of Madame Millin, a doctor's wife !

In spite of this disreputable warfare, we find Madame du Barry, in 1769, inhabiting a wing of the Castle of Versailles, presented at Court to the king and the royal family by the Comtesse de Bearn, going through that trying ordeal without a blunder, attending the king's mass in the royal chapel on Sunday, superbly attired and covered with diamonds, sitting at table with *Mesdames* the king's daughters, and playing at cards with the Dauphiness, Marie Antoinette.

A gazette of the epoch says—“ Madame du Barry was very well received by *Mesdames*, even with special kindness ; all the spectators admired the nobleness of

her deportment and the grace of her bearing." And the writer adds that at her reception Madame du Barry played her part as if she had been brought up at Court. Her beauty was acknowledged by nearly all who saw her but by the Duc de Choiseul. Mirabeau wrote of her—"Elmire has received from nature a collection of beauties of all kinds, seldom found united in the same person, from superb hair so thick and of so lovely a tint, down to her feet modelled by the hands of the graces." Her figure, her arms, her hands, all excited the enthusiasm of the passionate lover of Sophie. He also added that she never persuaded Louis XV. to commit a cruel and unjust act, and never had any one sent to the Bastille.

But, as M. Vatel observes, Louis XV. was soon smitten by something more than the physical charms of his new conquest; he found her full of life and fun; she had no reputation to bewail like Mademoiselle de Romans. At the same time, she was gifted not only with a good heart, but with a fund of common sense which induced Louis XV. soon to say, not, "I am in love with her," but, "I am satisfied with her."

We are told that the presentation of Madame du Barry excited the murmurs of Paris, for a new generation had arisen since the Marquise de Pompadour first made her appearance at Court—a generation which had read J. J. Rousseau and Montesquieu, and whose notions of thrones and dominations were assuming the most subversive tendencies. Then what

had been pardonable in a young king was no longer pardonable in a monarch in the sere and yellow leaf. What shocked Horace Walpole was the king going to mass and making the sign of the cross under the eyes of his mistress. He found her pretty, but nothing very striking about her, except that she was not painted.

But for the death of the queen, which took place in June 1768, the reception of Madame du Barry would have taken place at an earlier date.¹ For some inscrutable reason Louis XV., who had long been separated *de facto* from his wife, was so much grieved at her death that Madame Adélaïde conceived the greatest hopes that her father would amend his ways. She afterwards wrote that "he was then sincerely converted and determined to live like a good Christian, but Marshal Richelieu, on the plea that he required distraction, led him once more into sin." It is true that the Marshal protests in his

¹ HORACE WALPOLE TO SIR HORACE MANN.

"20th December, 1768.

"We are in constant expectation of hearing of the Duc de Choiseul's fall. The Comtesse de Barré maintains her ground, and they say will be presented to Mesdames [the king's daughters] as soon as the queen's mourning is over. This decency is delightful! While the queen lived the king kept his mistresses openly; now a new one is not to be declared while the Court still wears black and white silks for the queen! The Duc d'Aiguillon is talked of as Choiseul's successor. At fifty-eight or nine his Majesty picks up a prostitute, and gives her leave to change the administration. I think he should not be called the *well-beloved*, but the *well-beloving*."

Memoirs that he was absent when Madame du Barry appeared at Court; and the king himself, in a letter to the Duc de Choiseul afterwards, bore out the assertion of the dissipated old marshal. The Duc de Richelieu was not the only person blamed in this matter. The Jesuits were accused of having favoured the pretensions of Madame du Barry to spite the Duc de Choiseul, who, though brought up by the company of Jesus, had been the chief instrument of their expulsion from France.

Having been presented, the favourite could ride in the king's carriages,¹ and go with the Court to Marly, to Compiègne, and to Fontainebleau. She became a power in the State, and it must be admitted that on several occasions she exercised that power in favour of clemency and humanity. A girl who had been seduced by the *curé* of her parish, and

¹ The favourite has also her own fine equipages, as Bachaumont tells us—

“*September 30th.*—Madame du Barry has had a superb *vis-à-vis* built. It is finished, and crowds go to see it at the maker's. Nothing could be more elegant and at the same time more magnificent. Those of the Dauphiness, sent to Vienna, do not approach it in the way of taste and delicate workmanship. In addition to the arms, forming the subject of the four panels on a ground of gold, all the exterior of the carriage is covered with the famous war-cry, *Boutez-en-avant*; and one finds repeated in each of the side panels, baskets of roses, upon which two doves are amorously ‘beaking’ each other.” Then there were quivers, hearts pierced by arrows, torches, and all the attributes of Paphos. And “the smallest details, we are told, bear the impress of the mistress of this voluptuous car. Never did the arts rise to such a pitch of perfection.”

was delivered of a still-born child, was tried and sentenced to death because, in accordance with the law in force at that period, she had not given notice to the authorities that she was *enceinte*. The *curé* died before the child was born. The Parliament confirmed the sentence of the court, and the mother was about to be executed, when an officer of the Black Musketeers, M. de Mandeville, moved to compassion, went to Marly and appealed to Madame du Barry. The favourite, who knew little about the edict of Henri II. (issued to prevent infanticide), and confirmed and aggravated by Louis XIV., at once took up her pen and wrote the following eloquent and touching letter to the chancellor—

“I understand nothing of your laws, but they are unjust and barbarous ; they are contrary to good policy and humanity, if they cause a poor girl who has given birth to a still-born child, without declaring it, to be put to death.

“According to the enclosed memorial, the case of the petitioner is this : she is condemned for having been ignorant of the law, or for not having conformed to it through a feeling of modesty exceedingly natural.

“I submit the examination of this affair to your equity, for this unfortunate girl deserves your indulgence. I ask at least for a commutation of the penalty. Your own heart will dictate the rest.”

The girl was pardoned, and we are told that all Paris applauded this action, honourable alike for the countess, the musketeer, and the minister of justice.

M. Vatel, who quotes the above from the *Anecdotes* of Pidansat de Mayrobert, doubts some portions of this story, but not the fact of Appoline Grégeois

having been saved from the gallows through the intervention of Madame du Barry. He also quotes other cases in which she obtained pardons from Louis XV., who was not given to interfere with the course of justice, and had not been importuned in this matter by the marquise.

In a letter from Ferney, dated 31st August, 1769, Voltaire, writing to the Comtesse de Rochefort, speaks of Madame du Barry, "who is, I think, a good woman;" and Voltaire belonged to the Choiseul faction. We shall see what the patriarch wrote afterwards.

In May 1770 the Dauphin was married to Marie Antoinette, who was thus brought into contact with the favourite, whom she treated with something more than disdain. And yet Marie Antoinette had been specially recommended by her imperial mother, while bearing in mind that her marriage was due to the Duc de Choiseul, to keep on good terms with Madame du Barry. But we shall refer at a later period to the letters which Maria Theresa wrote to the Austrian ambassador, Mercy d'Argenteau, on this subject, and shall merely mention here that Marie Antoinette at this period found the favourite "silly and impertinent," and never spoke to her. On the other hand, Madame du Barry seems to have been always overwhelmed in the presence of the Dauphiness, and to have treated her with the most abject servility. However, Marie Antoinette was strongly prejudiced against the favourite, and very naturally so; nor

did this feeling wear off until trouble overtook her.

The idea that Madame du Barry caused the downfall of the Duc de Choiseul is ridiculed by M. Vatel ; and, in fact, the king had serious reasons to be dissatisfied with his minister without any interference on the part of the favourite. The anecdote of Madame du Barry throwing oranges in the air, and crying, “ *Saute, Choiseul ! saute, Praslin !* ” and Choiseul and Praslin being driven from office and exiled from the Court, is trivial in the extreme ; though, of course, the favourite may have exerted her influence in favour of the faction hostile to the ministers. It is true that Choiseul plumed himself on having relinquished office because his modesty was offended by the presence of such a woman as Madame du Barry. It was considered clever on the part of the fallen minister to attribute his fall to so honourable a cause, but did he speak the truth ? When Madame du Barry was introduced into the charmed circle at Versailles, the Marshal du Muy at once resigned, but it took the Duc de Choiseul three years to realize the fact that it was inconsistent with his dignity to be brought into contact with the new favourite, and that he ought to retire to Chanteloup. Would not this modesty, if it had existed, have been out of place ?

In his *Memoirs*,¹ Bezenval, who was a bosom friend of the Duc de Choiseul, says that the minister was the intimate friend of Madame de Pompadour, who

¹ t. i. p. 248.

raised him to office ; and Cardinal de Bernis tells us in his *Memoirs*¹ that “the fortune of the Duc de Choiseul originated in a veritable infamy. Some letters which the king had written to his cousin, Madame de Choiseul Romanet, were confided to him, and he communicated them to Madame de Pompadour. . . . Being of a grateful disposition, Madame de Pompadour understood the value of the service rendered, and from that moment her aversion for M. de Sainteville [Choiseul] was changed into friendship.”

We know how he both caused and allowed Madame du Barry to be lampooned in the grossest manner, but what is to be thought of this extract from a letter written by Madame du Deffant, one of his friends, dated 2nd November, 1769 ? “Grandpapa [Choiseul] is in good humour, but rather uneasy concerning the lady [Madame du Barry]. He is snubbed daily, and not invited to her suppers. She makes wry faces when she has him for a partner at whist ; she also shrugs her shoulders and indulges in other girlish tricks.” From which it would appear that what most annoyed his Grace was, not being obliged to attend the little suppers of the favourite, but not having been asked to them.

In a letter which the king wrote to Choiseul in 1770, and to which we have already referred, his Majesty said—“You know Madame du Barry. It was not Richelieu who introduced her to me, although he knew her. She is pretty, and I am satisfied with

¹ t. i. p. 266.

her. . . . She bears you no ill-will. . . . She is aware of your talent, and does not wish to harm you. The outcry against her has been frightful, and for the most part unjust."

There is no authentic evidence of any display of animosity against the Duc de Choiseul on the part of Madame du Barry beyond that mentioned by Madame du Deffant. She naturally resented the conduct of the duke in the matter of the scurrilous libels hawked about the streets of Paris, but her resentment was never carried very far. There exist proofs of this. In June 1770 she wrote to Choiseul in behalf of a Monsieur d'Arcambal, who required some favour. Now Madame du Barry would hardly have appealed to the duke to befriend a quondam admirer had she been on bad terms with him.

Let us see what took place after Choiseul had fallen into disgrace. It was felt that, having been exiled to Chanteloup, he could not well hold the post of Colonel-General of the Swiss troops in the king's service—twenty-six battalions in all. Then the pay was considerable, and the Comte de Provence (afterwards Louis XVIII.), Richelieu, and other courtiers coveted the appointment. The question, however, arose as to whether the appointment was permanent or not, and if the Duc de Choiseul could be deprived of it. The Swiss troops, be it remarked, were not entirely under the authority of the French king; they were mercenaries in a foreign service, but they continued nevertheless to owe a certain amount

of allegiance to their native land. During the intrigues which took place at Versailles with the view of getting rid of the ex-minister, the cantons were appealed to and asked to apply for a new Colonel-General. Much to the astonishment of the duke's enemies, they refused to take this step. The duke, however, who was well acquainted with what was going on at Court, was so uneasy that he got his friend the Duc du Châtelet to go to Versailles to protect his interests. M. du Châtelet was under great obligations to the fallen minister, who had sent him as ambassador first to London and then to Vienna; and at the same time he was on intimate terms with the Duc d'Aiguillon, with whom he had been at school. M. de Châtelet repaired to Court, and did what he could with the king and with the Duc d'Aiguillon, but as neither his Majesty nor his minister would listen to his proposals for an arrangement, in his perplexity he rushed off to Madame du Barry, and, as Bezenval tells us, "exposed to her with warmth the enormity of the injustice done to M. Choiseul, and the harshness and bad faith of his enemies. . . . Madame du Barry replied very kindly and entered into all his views. She said that although she had much to complain of on the part of M. de Choiseul, she herself ought to count for nothing. His real crime was having attacked the taste of the king; but that would not prevent her from doing all that was possible for him, and this she promised."

However, M. du Châtelet failed in his mission, and returned to Chanteloup. The Duc de Choiseul then determined to adopt another course. He was not without some apprehension that resistance on his part might lead to very disagreeable results, and perhaps a cell in the Bastille. He therefore threw himself on the king's mercy, and got M. du Châtelet to convey a letter to Louis XV., in which he resigned his commission of Colonel-General, leaving the question of compensation entirely in the hands of his Majesty. The duke had before offered to resign on certain conditions, which the king and his minister had considered exorbitant and had rejected. Monsieur du Châtelet again had recourse to Madame du Barry, and Bezenval adds that,—“He was satisfied with the conversation he had with her; he spoke to her with vehemence in the interest of Monsieur de Choiseul, and of the faults he had to find with the Duc d'Aiguillon. . . . She said that she had spoken in favour of Monsieur de Choiseul to the king, and that she hoped he would give him a pension of 60,000 francs, and ready money to the amount of 100,000 silver crowns. . . .”¹

Matters remained in abeyance for a while. The Duc d'Aiguillon was annoyed at Monsieur du Châtelet having presented Choiseul's letter to the king, and dealing direct with his Majesty and Madame du Barry; and the Duc du Châtelet was so dissatisfied with the conduct of his old schoolfellow, that

¹ *Memoirs*, t. i. pp. 274, 278.

he told him that he would never again set foot in his house. Monsieur du Châtelet followed the king to Choisy, and once more appealed to the favourite. The salon was crowded. Madame du Barry took the Duc d'Aiguillon aside and had an animated conversation with him. A moment afterwards she suddenly left him, saying, loud enough to be heard, "It must be so." Then she approached the king, who was standing near the fire, and after talking with him a few instants called Monsieur d'Aiguillon. The three had a conversation, which was promptly terminated, and the king was heard to say, on leaving them to take his place at the card-table, "60,000 francs pension and 100,000 silver crowns down."

Thus the Duc de Choiseul received more than the value of his commission, and, thanks to Madame du Barry (though she told Monsieur du Châtelet that it was all the king's doing), was able to pay his debts and live in peace.

We may here insert another of Bachaumont's notes, which concerns both Madame du Barry and the state of the French Treasury in 1771.

"*March 25th.*—The Empress of Russia has just bought the picture-gallery of the Comte de Thiers, a distinguished amateur, who had a very fine collection. Monsieur de Marigny has had the pain of seeing these riches going to a foreign country, having no funds to purchase them for the king. Among the pictures was a full-length portrait of Charles I., King of England, by Van Dyck. This is the only one which has remained in France. The Comtesse du Barry, who displays more and more taste for the arts, gave orders for it to be bought. She paid 84,000 livres for it, and when reproached with having selected this among so many other pictures,

she replied that it was a family portrait which she wished to possess. In fact, the Du Barrys claim to be related to the House of Stuart."

Madame du Barry is said one day to have called the attention of her royal lover to this portrait, which is now in the Louvre, saying, "Well, France, you see that picture. If you allow your Parliament to have its own way it will cut off your head as the English Parliament cut off that of Charles I." Louis XV. died too soon. It was his successor that lost his head and Madame du Barry too.

It is hardly within the compass of this work to go into the real causes of the disgrace of the Duc de Choiseul. Suffice it to say, that in the estimation of the king he was guilty of having excited the parliaments against the royal authority, and of having wished to drag France, in conjunction with Spain, into a war with England, for which she was quite unprepared, having neither men nor money. The Duc de Choiseul may have been innocent of this intention, but Louis XV. was so convinced to the contrary, that he wrote with his own hand to the King of Spain not to count upon his assistance should he declare war against England, and this in spite of the *pacté de famille* which bound all the Bourbons—those of France, Spain, Naples, Parma, and Plaisance—to help each other in difficulty. During the "Seven Years' War," France had lost India, Canada, and nearly all her colonies, and had even been obliged to dismantle the fortifications of Dunkirk on the

seaside; and Bezenval, that warm advocate of the fallen minister, says that in spite of all that the Duc de Choiseul had accomplished in eight years of peace—fortifying Brest and Toulon, and placing the army on a better footing than it had ever been before—yet neither as regards numbers or talent was France in a condition to grapple with England.

Certainly the conduct of Madame du Barry towards the Duc de Choiseul, after his fall, showed no symptoms of animosity; and if the favourite had been the chief instrument of his disgrace, and if his dignity had not allowed him to remain at Versailles, where her presence was tolerated, is it probable that he would have sought her aid in the matter of the 60,000 francs pension and 100,000 silver crowns down?

Horace Walpole took great interest in this Choiseul Du Barry affair, as we may see from the following extracts of letters addressed to Sir Horace Mann. He certainly shows that the exile of the duke was due to something more than the caprice of a mistress, that he was a firebrand capable at any moment of setting Europe in a blaze. On the 31st January, 1769—or two years before the fall of the duke—he wrote as follows on the absurd story of the oranges—

“ Catin [Harlot] diverts herself and King Solomon the Wise with tossing oranges into the air after supper, and crying, ‘*Saute, Choiseul! saute, Praslin!*’ and then Solomon laughs heartily. Sometimes she flings powder in his face, and calls him *Jean Farine!* Well, we are not the foolishlest nation in Europe yet!”

And on the 28th February—

“I was talking of this adventure the other day to old Mrs. Selwyn. She said, with all the wit of her son George, ‘The French have often outwitted us, I hope now they will outfool us.’”

And on the 19th July—

“... Madame du Barri gains ground, and yet Monsieur de Choiseul carries all his points. He has taken Corsica, bought Sweden, made a Pope, got the Czarina drubbed by the Turks, and restored the Parliament of Brittany in spite of the Duc d’Aiguillon, for revenge can make so despotic and ambitious a man as Choiseul even turn patriot, and yet at this moment I believe he dreads my Lord Chatham more than Madame du Barri.”

And on the 8th October—

“His ambition is unbounded; and if the times resemble those of Charles I., we shall find in him another Richelieu. . . . You do not doubt of the reckless ambition of Choiseul. Every step he takes marks that it is pointed at us. . . . He has poured the Turks on Russia. . . . To his levity,¹ in truth, I trust much. It is equal to his daring. He is every instant on the point of falling by provoking Madame. . . . A fortnight ago she sent for him to ask a favour for a dependant. He replied, she might come to him. She insisted, and he went and stayed above an hour, and yet did not grant what she asked. However, the length of the visit did not look hostile.”

And on the 30th November—

“The Duc de Choiseul maintains his ground against the mistress. She has lately been so well bred as, when at whist with the king, to make faces at the minister, if he was her partner. Solomon thought this a little too strong, and has reprimanded his beloved.

¹ Concerning the levity of the Duc de Choiseul, after his fall, Madame du Deffant relates how “Grandpapa,” having a slight cold, remained in bed and had fairy tales read to him all day long. When he recovered he did worsted work with great assiduity. “Now it is a kite which affords us amusement. Grandpapa was not acquainted with this spectacle, and is enchanted with it.”

Yet, considering that he loves canticles better than fighting, I should think she would recover her advantages if the minister should involve the pacific monarch in another war."

And then on the 29th December, 1770—

"The Duc de Choiseul is fallen. . . . The Duc de Praslin is banished also—a disagreeable man. . . . I shall shed no tears for Châtelet, the most peevish and insolent of men, our bitter enemy, and whom Monsieur de Choiseul may thank in some measure for his fall ; for I believe while Châtelet was here he drew the Spaniards into the attack of Falkland's Island. Choiseul's own conduct seems to have been not a little equivocal. . . . Thus Abishag¹ [Madame du Barry] has strangled an administration which had lasted fourteen years. I am sincerely grieved for the Duchess de Choiseul, the most perfect being I know of either sex. I cannot possibly feel for her husband desolation and confusion reign all over France ; they are almost bankrupts and quite famished." ²

"In France the scene seems thoroughly foolish. The Duke of Choiseul has lost his power ridiculously by braving a *filles de joie* to humour two women,³ who seem to think "qu'on ne doit pas être impunement putain, sans être grande dame."

On the 8th May, 1771, he wrote—"Monsieur de Maupeou and Madame du Barry have saved us from

¹ A Shunammite woman of great beauty whom David in his old age added to his harem.

² Bachaumont says that the Lord's Prayer was thus paraphrased at this time : —

"Our Father who art at Versailles ; hallowed be thy name ; thy reign is unstable ; thy will is no more done upon earth than in heaven ; give us our daily bread of which you have deprived us ; forgive our Parliaments which have supported our interests, as you have pardoned our ministers who have betrayed them ; do not yield to the temptations of the Du Barry, but deliver us from that devil of a chancellor."

In fact, France under the Duc de Choiseul had been reduced to the verge of ruin.

³ The Duchesse de Gramont, the sister of the Duc de Choiseul, and her friend the Princesse de Beauvau.

war." And in 1774, on hearing of the king's death, "If Monsieur de Choiseul returns to power it will want no prophet to announce war."

On New Year's Day 1773 Madame du Barry went to pay her respects to the dauphiness, but met with the most cold and haughty reception. The Duc de Choiseul was no longer minister, and his successor, the Duc d'Aiguillon, had some difficulty in appeasing the offended beauty. The matter was reported to Maria Theresa, who once more remonstrated with her daughter, whose repugnance was not to be overcome by lectures from Vienna. At the Court balls Marie Antoinette would speak to none of the ladies who visited the countess.

At this period Madame du Barry seems to have procured a legal separation from her husband, no doubt with the view of preventing him from levying blackmail. The ties which had bound this couple together in one sense were of the loosest description, and could not in the eyes of the Catholic Church have been considered as constituting a marriage; they were now altogether snapped asunder by the civil law.¹ At the same time the *Roué* appears to

¹ Henri Martin says that Madame du Barry at this moment hoped that the king would marry her. After showing us the chancellor receiving the communion at St. Denis in the morning, and in the afternoon attending the toilette of the mistress, and the Papal Nuncio and the Grand Almoner, the Cardinal de la Roche-Aymon, presenting Madame du Barry with her slippers as she got out of bed. It is said that the favourite carried her pretensions so far as to dream of marrying the king. She would have demanded

have kept upon good terms with his sister-in-law and quondam mistress, for we find that with the aid of the Duc d'Aiguillon he obtained a very large sum of money as compensation for the Corsican contracts which had not been carried out—a sum so considerable, seeing the impoverished condition of the Treasury, that many marvelled and some murmured.

On the 28th April, 1774, Louis XV. fell ill, and Madame du Barry, aware that his fear of the devil would return if he became alarmed, and that a confessor would be sent for, wished his Majesty to remain at the Little Trianon where he was passing a few days. However, the Duc d'Aiguillon and the king's chief medical adviser, La Martinière, insisted that he should at once return to Versailles, and the Court doctors, and Leroi and Borden, two Paris celebrities, were summoned to the bedside of the monarch. They pronounced that Louis was suffering from small-pox, which ere long exhibited itself in its most virulent form.

Bezenval, who has given us a graphic description of the death of the king, says that only two persons showed the least interest in his fate—Marshal Soubise and the Duc de Noailles, who had known him from infancy, and who had been overwhelmed with favours. He adds that as soon as the king's illness was de-

the annulation of her marriage with the count on the ground that she had had a *weakness* for his brother, and that it constituted a case of incest! The king had a horrible dread of hell, and it was this which suggested to Madame du Barry the burlesque idea of playing the part of Madame de Maintenon.

clared to be small-pox all communication between the monarch and the royal family was intercepted; but that Mesdames Adélaïde, Victoire, and Sophie courageously insisted upon nursing their father. The Duke of Orleans, the Prince de Condé, and the Comte de la Marche also remained shut up with the king, while the Duc de Chartres¹ and the Duc de Bourbon remained with the dauphin. As for the people, they desired the death of his Majesty owing to the immorality of his existence, and the fabulous sums he lavished on his mistress. Louis XV. was in fact no longer the *Well-Beloved*. Ever since the nation awarded him that epithet his popularity had been gradually declining. In 1744, when his Majesty was lying ill at Metz, private individuals caused 6000 masses to be said at Notre Dame for his recovery, and paid for them; in 1757, after the Damiens attempt, only 600 were said, and during the last illness of the king this number fell to three!

It is painful to read of all the squabbling which took place round the death-bed of the expiring monarch. The Duc d'Aiguillon, Madame du Barry, and their friends were strongly opposed to the last sacraments being administered, lest the shock should prove fatal, and in this they were backed up by Madame Adélaïde. An unseemly dispute took place between the Duc d'Aumont, first gentleman of the bedchamber, and the Prince de Beauvau, Captain of the Guards, as to the persons who should be admitted to see the

¹ Better known afterwards as Philippe Égalité.

king. The duke confided the care of the sick chamber to the *valet de chambre*, Laborde, who, one evening after having obliged every one to leave the room, introduced Madame du Barry.

The baron next tells us that "the party which wished for a change" were very anxious for Monseigneur de Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris, a friend of the Jesuits, to arrive, and much astonishment was expressed that he tarried so long, although it was known that he was suffering from the stone. At last his presence was announced, and Marshal Richelieu left the king's room to go and meet him. They sat down on a bench in the guard-room. The marshal spoke to the archbishop with much vehemence, evidently trying to persuade him not to administer the sacraments. Perhaps he pointed out that they had already been twice administered, once in 1744, and again in 1757. The Duc d'Aumont then joined them, and in the end the archbishop was allowed to enter the sick-room, between the duke and the marshal; there was no one with the king but the Duke of Orleans; and the archbishop, after having spoken to his Majesty concerning his health, retired and went back to Paris.

"The party which wished for a change" was much scandalized, and the bishops also complained of the conduct of Monseigneur de Beaumont. The Cardinal de La Roche-Aymon, the Grand Almoner, was now appealed to. He was known to be devoted to the Duc d'Aiguillon and Madame du Barry, but the case was

urgent. The bishops called upon him in the name of religion to perform his duty. The cardinal felt greatly embarrassed ; he remembered what had happened on previous occasions. To resist the bishops would be his ruin should the king die, and should the king recover he would lose not only the royal favour, but that of his minister and his mistress. In order at the same time to avoid both Scylla and Charybdis, the archbishop steered a very cunning course. He said that as the doctors were opposed to anything being done to alarm the king, he could not therefore propose to administer the sacraments openly, but he promised to avail himself of the first opportunity to put his Majesty in the right way. After that he saw the king several times each day, conversing with him in so low a tone that no one else could hear what was said. In this way the crafty prelate was able to give his own version of what passed between Louis and himself.

On the evening of the 4th May, Madame du Barry, having been again introduced into the sick-room by Laporte, was much astonished when the king said—“ Madam, I am ill ; I know what my duty is. I do not wish to renew the scene of Metz. Go to the residence of the Duc d’Aiguillon at Ruel ; be sure that I shall always entertain the most tender feelings of friendship for you.” The impression made upon Madame du Barry by these words may be easily imagined, and yet they ought not to have surprised her beyond measure.

There was a great flutter at Court when it was known that Madame du Barry had left Versailles, but the delight of her enemies was somewhat marred when they learned that she was only two leagues off, and would instantly return if the king recovered.

On the night of the 5th May, his Majesty, who had been wandering, suddenly asked for his confessor the Abbé Mondou. Monsieur de Duras happened to be on duty, and as he was an enemy of the Duc d'Aiguillon, he allowed the confessor to enter. The abbé remained with the king for about an hour, and after he left, his Majesty declared his intention of receiving the viaticum the next day, and sent for the Duc d'Aiguillon. The fact is that the abbé had refused to give him absolution with Madame du Barry so close at hand, and poor Louis, to gain salvation, had to send for the duke to tell him to order the countess to go to Chinon.

D'Aiguillon, although he now considered his Majesty *in extremis*, endeavoured to convince him that there must be some mistake. Instead of sending Madame du Barry to Chinon, he rushed off to the Cardinal de La Roche-Aymon and to the Abbé Mondou to try to persuade them to administer the sacraments unconditionally. The duke met with a good deal of opposition on the part of the abbé, but with little resistance from the cardinal, and matters were settled as he desired.

In the meantime the king, who felt his life quickly ebbing away, and who was terribly afraid of dying

unaneled, was in a state of great anxiety. He several times sent the Prince de Beauvau to the window to see if the sacraments were coming. They arrived at last, and were duly administered by the cardinal in his quality of Grand Almoner.

After the ceremony it was remarked that the abbé pulled the cardinal by the surplice and whispered something in his ear, upon which the cardinal declared the king to be in a state of grace, that he repented him of his evil ways and would sin no more—a declaration which drew down on the head of the cardinal a most insulting epithet from Marshal Richelieu.

It was thought that Louis XV. would not get through the night of the 9th, and he received extreme unction. The next morning he felt rather better, thanks to stimulants, but he did not survive many hours, and at two o'clock on the afternoon of the 10th May he died. As soon as he expired every one fled from Versailles, with the exception of the Duc d'Ayen, Captain of the Scotch Guard, whose duty it was to guard the dead king; the Duc d'Aumont, first gentleman of the bedchamber; and the Marquis de Dreux, grand master of the ceremonies.

The Baron de Bezenval says—"They hastened to enclose the body in two coffins of lead, which imperfectly prevented the infection exhaling from it; a few priests in the *chapelle ardente* were the only victims condemned not to abandon the remains of the king, who, by his shameful immorality and his

neglect of his duties and his subjects, had rendered himself the object of almost universal hatred. I was on guard over him at the time of his death, and had the curiosity to mingle with the people who filled the courtyards. The French, naturally gay, frivolous, and good-hearted, do not manifest their feelings in the same vulgar and brutal way as other people. There was little said, but it was easy to remark on every face an expression of satisfaction. Two days later the body was conveyed to St. Denis, and the funeral resembled rather the removal of a load one was in a hurry to get rid of than the last duties rendered to a monarch. As the king had died of a contagious disease, none of the usual and costly ceremonies were observed. The coffin was placed in a large carriage; a second carriage contained the Duc d'Aumont and the Duc d'Ayen; a third the Grand Almoner and the curé of Versailles. About twenty pages and fifty grooms on horseback, none of them in mourning, composed the *cortége*, which set out at a trot from Versailles at eight p.m., and arrived at St. Denis shortly before midnight."

The baron, himself a Swiss, after praising the French at the expense of other people, admits that when the *cortége* entered St. Denis it was hailed with jeers by the persons who lined the road, "who, favoured by the obscurity, gave free vent to that joking which is the predominant characteristic of the nation." And thus was Louis XV. gathered to his fathers, nor could prayers of forty hours, nor the

letting up and down of the shrine of St. Geneviève prevent him from going the way of all flesh.

In Bachaumont we read under date 23rd June—
“It is related that the Abbé of St. Geneviève, when out dining, was teased by some young fellows, who said that his saint had lost all her power, the shrine having been uselessly uncovered and let down during the illness of Louis XV. When they had finished, the abbé replied, ‘Well, gentlemen, what reproach have you to address to heaven? Is he not dead?’”

M. Vatel gives us a copy of the *lettre de cachet*, which at the same time consigned the *Roué* to Vincennes, and Madame du Barry to Pont-aux-Dames, at which convent she remained from May 1774 until March 1775, for she was not to be tolerated within ten leagues of Paris or Versailles. She was afterwards allowed to return to Louveciennes, the delightful residence which Louis XV. had given her; and Louis XVI. was reproached with not having deprived her of her ill-gotten wealth. So far from despoiling her, the Government gave Madame du Barry a sum of £50,000 in exchange for a claim of £2000 a year which she had on the city of Paris.

Madame du Barry was not entirely forgotten under the new reign. We find that several of the highest ladies of the land corresponded with her. In 1777, when Joseph II. paid a visit to the French Court, he strolled over to Louveciennes, and, much to the annoyance of his sister, Marie Antoinette, spent a couple of hours with the quondam favourite. We

then find her captivating Lord Henry Seymour, who resided at the Château de Prunay, from whose windows Louveciennes is visible. The letters which Madame du Barry wrote to her English lover, who was in his fiftieth year, are those of a tender-hearted accomplished woman. This *liaison*, which was carried on in the most discreet manner and without any scandal, lasted for two years, and was probably broken off in consequence of a more youthful admirer appearing upon the scene in the shape of the Duc de Brissac.

Concerning this last *liaison*, Monsieur d'Allonville writes¹—"The love for Monsieur de Brissac did Madame du Barry the greatest honour. It would have been an equivalent to the purification of her past life had it not been illegitimate and doubly adulterous from a legal point of view." However, appearances were observed. The Duc de Brissac not only belonged to one of the first families of France, occupied the post of Governor of Paris, and was exceedingly wealthy, but he was a nobleman of high honour and considerable attainments. His letters to Madame du Barry, published by M. Vatel, some of them written after he had fallen into the clutches of the *sansculottes*, show the depth and, if we may be excused the expression, the purity of his affection. In fact, in spite of broken vows, there was some truth in what d'Allonville wrote, much as it may shock the moralist. However, we are writing neither the life

¹ *Mémoires Secrets*, I. i.

nor the apology of Madame du Barry. We know that—

“Every sin a tear can claim,
Except an erring sister’s shame.”

A few more remarks and we have done. In 1788 we find the ambassadors of Tippoo Saib paying their Court to the ex-favourite. They proposed making war against England, and came to solicit the support of France. They entered Paris in great state, in twelve carriages each drawn by six horses. They were received at Versailles on the 12th August, and on the 15th they attended mass at Notre Dame. They went to Louveciennes, where they presented Madame du Barry with various presents, “after the custom of the East,” supposing, it is thought, that she was the mistress of Louis XVI. The French Government had refused their demand for troops; they were aware of the fate which awaited them should they return home without having effected the object of their mission, and hence their appeal to Madame du Barry, which of course was useless.

In the *Mémoires de la Reine de France*, by Lafont d’Aussonne, we find that—“When the Revolution broke out, the house of Madame du Barry became the rendezvous of all the friends of Louis XVI. and of the queen. The *gardes de corps*, who escaped the massacre of the 6th October, dragged themselves from Versailles to Louveciennes, and the countess nursed them in her chateau as their own parents would have done. The queen, informed of this

amiable and generous conduct on the part of the countess, charged some nobles in her confidence to go to Louveciennes, and to carry thither her sincere thanks." Upon this Madame du Barry offered her Majesty Louveciennes and all she possessed. This gift was refused by the queen, who at that moment, together with the king, was a prisoner in Paris.

In 1791, while Madame du Barry was absent from Louveciennes, the chateau was broken into, and the robbers carried off a "royal treasure." A reward of 2000 louis was offered for the recovery of the jewels. Shortly afterwards Madame du Barry received notice that the thieves—three German Jews, a Frenchman, and an Englishman called Harris—had been arrested in London, and this necessitated her presence in England. Horace Walpole, in a letter dated the 26th February, 1791, mentions the fact of Madame du Barry arriving to claim the jewels which had been stolen from her, "not by the National Assembly, but by four Jews, who have been seized here and committed to Newgate. Though the late Lord Barrymore acknowledged her husband to be of his noble blood, will she own the present earl for a relation when she finds him turned strolling player?"

Again, on the 15th April, 1791, Horace Walpole informs Miss Berrys that Madame du Barry dined with the Prince of Wales at the Duke of Queensberry's, at Richmond; and, on the 23rd June, that "the late Queen of France was at Mrs. Hobart's party, and the late Queen of England, Madame d'Albany, was not.

The former, they say, is as much altered as her kingdom, and does not retain a trace of her former powers." And then, in a letter to the Countess of Ossory, 30th September, 1791, he says—"I have scarce a newer anecdote to send you but that old Q. presented Madame du Barry to the king on the terrace at Windsor, and the King of England did not turn the same side that the late King of France used to turn to her, but the reverse, as he told Lord Onslow himself." It was a strange oblivion of etiquette in an *ancien gentilhomme de la chambre*, and more so in one dismissed!

Horace Walpole also tells us how when Madame du Barry went to the Mansion House about her jewels, the Lord Mayor kept her to dine with him. In all Madame du Barry paid four flying visits to London, during which she appears to have been treated with consideration by every one but George III., and she recovered her stolen property. M. Vatel mentions the report that Pitt advised her not to return to France. If he did the advice was sound, for she had hardly got back to Louveciennes when she was arrested, or at least she was placed under supervision, and had a patriot appointed to take charge of her. The people of her district petitioned the Assembly in her favour, and gave a touching description of her charitable disposition, and how she was always ready to relieve the poor, looking after their wants herself. The consequence was that the patriot was withdrawn. A short time before this Madame Lebrun had gone to Louveciennes to paint Madame du Barry's portrait, and

she has left it on record how the countess went out in all weathers to visit the poor, and how she flew in a passion because she found a poor woman in child-bed without any necessary comforts, and how wine, broth, and linen were at once despatched to her. The petition to which we have referred was signed by the mayor, the procurator, and fifty-seven citizens.

But Madame du Barry had a relentless enemy in the person of a man called Grievés, an Englishman, says M. Vatel, a deputy of the United States, and he denounced Madame du Barry as having conspired in London against the Republic, and declared the jewel robbery to have been a pretence for crossing the Channel. Madame du Barry was consequently arrested, thrown into prison, and finally brought up for trial. The infamous Fouquier Tinville, then commencing his sanguinary career, who wrote with great rapidity, took notes of the proceedings. The prisoner was accused of conspiring with the enemies of the Republic, and with procuring immense sums of money in England; with having gone into mourning for Louis XVI. (which was true); with living habitually in London with Pitt, and wearing a medal with his likeness stamped upon it; with having squandered the money belonging to the State; with having returned to France with a certificate signed by Queensberry, a great enemy of the Revolution,¹ &c.

Madame du Barry was defended by Chauveau-Lagarde, who had previously defended Baron de

¹ War had then broken out between France and England.

Bezenval, Charlotte Corday, and Marie Antoinette—the baron alone with success. At eleven o'clock at night the prisoner was sentenced to death, and she was executed at eleven o'clock the next morning. On the scaffold she exhibited a want of fortitude; she shrieked and resisted the executioners; but it has been remarked that if all the women who allowed themselves to be tamely guillotined had done the same, the Reign of Terror would not have lasted as long as it did.

We may add that two men, well known during the Revolution, saw and admired Madame du Barry. Brissot relates in his *Memoirs*, that when he was timidly going up-stairs to try and see Voltaire, he met Madame du Barry descending. He spoke to her, and she replied in the most winning manner. He found her so lovely that he “became almost indulgent for the weakness of the king.” But think of St. Just, that cruel and remorseless triumvir, who, when young and a poet, and before he fell in with Robespierre, celebrated the charms of the favourite in verse—her blue eyes, luxuriant ashy hair, and “frozen bosom.”

In the correspondence of Voltaire we find a passing allusion to the visit referred to by Brissot. It is contained in the following letter—

MONSIEUR LEBRUN TO MONSIEUR DE BUFFON.

“May, 1778.

“ The tears rolled down his eyes when speaking of *Belle et Bonne*, as he calls her, and comparing her simple grace to that of Madame du Barry, who had just left him.”

The *Belle et Bonne* being the Marquise de Villette, who had been brought up by Voltaire.

Five years before that visit, when the favourite was at Versailles, and Louis XV. was alive, the Patriarch had a higher idea of her if we may judge by the following letter—

À MADAME LA COMTESSE DU BARRY.

“20th June, 1773.

“MADAME,—Monsieur de la Borde told me that you had ordered him to kiss me on either cheek from you.

Quoi ! deux baisers sur la fin de ma vie !
 Quel passe-port vous daignez m'envoyer !
 Deux ! c'est trop d'un, adorable Egérie ;
 Je serais mort de plaisir au premier.

He has shown me your portrait ; do not be angry, Madame, if I took the liberty of returning the two kisses.

Vous ne pouvez empêcher cet hommage,
 Faible tribut de quiconque a des yeux.
 C'est aux mortels d'adorer votre image ;
 L'original était fait pour les dieux.

I have heard several airs from the *Pandore* of M. de la Borde ; they appear to me to be worthy of your protection. Favour shown to real works of art is the only thing which can augment the brilliancy with which you shine.

Votre portrait va me suivre sans cesse,
 Et je lui rends vos baisers ravissants,
 Oui, tous les deux ; et, dans ma douce ivresse,
 Je voudrais voir renaître mon printemps.

Deign to accept, Madame, the profound respect of an old hermit whose heart has now hardly any other feeling than that of gratitude.”

A few words concerning the fate of the *Roué* may be deemed interesting. Shortly after the death of

Louis XV., he seems to have retired to Toulouse with a sum equivalent to about £60,000 of money to-day. He is said to have lived the life of a Sybarite, and also to have formed a valuable collection of works of art. Arthur Young, in his celebrated voyage through France, found him living in opulence; he visited his house, and was so much struck with the portrait of Madame du Barry that he could pardon the king his infatuation for such a beauty.

When the Revolution took place Jean du Barry adopted the new ideas, and raised and paid an armed force. This proved his ruin; he got into debt, was obliged to hide from his creditors, and in those days any one hiding was considered an *émigré*. He was arrested, underwent a sham trial, and was sent to the scaffold, where, at the age of seventy, after addressing the people, he died with courage and resignation.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DAUGHTERS OF LOUIS XV.

MESDAMES, the daughters of Louis XV., have been somewhat harshly treated by the historian—generally dismissed with a few contemptuous phrases. And yet they were not much to blame for the part they played. With the exception of *Madame Première* none of them married, and life must often have been exceedingly irksome to the royal sisters, Mesdames Henriette, Adélaïde, Victoire, Sophie, and Louise. To Madame Henriette we shall devote a few separate pages. *Mesdames*, with the exception of Madame Adélaïde, were all brought up, for the sake of economy, at the convent at Fontevrault, where they learned little but devotional practices.¹ The kind of education the daughters of Louis XV. received at this convent may be judged from the fact of Madame Louise, when she made her appearance at Court, telling Madame Campan that at the age of

¹ Fontevrault, in the department of the Maine et Loire, an ancient abbey of much interest to us as containing the tombs of some of our royal Plantagenets, Counts of Anjou, amongst them that of Richard Cœur de Lion, whose body was buried there, his heart being interred at Rouen.

twelve years she had not got through her alphabet, and that she did not learn to read properly until she returned to Versailles.

Great was the change from the cold and gloomy walls of their convent to the pestiferous atmosphere of a Court where they found their mother neglected and a mistress the presiding genius. It is much to their credit that they learned to write correctly; that they became fairly conversant with history, with English, Italian,¹ and mathematics; that they played on divers instruments, including the horn and the Jew's harp, and that they learned the more mechanical arts of turning and clock-making.

That at an early hour they indulged in intrigue is not to be wondered at. They found the Court divided into two parties—the clerical party headed by the queen and the dauphin, and the anti-clerical party which was supported by the king and the favourite. Their early training, if nothing else, prompted them to fall into the ranks of the former, and Madame Adélaïde, the most spirited of the family, was soon regarded as its standard-bearer.² They all of them

¹ In Bachaumont we find the following—

“12th January, 1769.—The king has just bestowed a pension of 4000 livres upon Goldoni, summoned to France some years ago by the Italian comedians to support their theatre, and since then appointed to teach *Mesdames* the language in which he has written such interesting plays, on account of which he has been called the Molière of Italy. . . .”

² It is related of this princess that, when eleven years of age, she got up one night, slipped on a gown and a petticoat, put fourteen louis in her pocket, and left her room with the intention of mounting

“wept over the misfortunes of Jerusalem,” or in other words, the immorality of their father; not that their tears or prayers were of any avail.

Madame Henriette is represented to us as slight, delicate, a daughter of the North, with something dreamy and inspired pervading her person; with features gentle and pure, with a melancholy smile, and destined, like Ophelia, to die while gathering flowers. It is thus that the painter Nattier has handed down to us the twin sister of the Duchess of Parma. She was brought up at the convent of Fontevrault like her other sisters, with the exception of Madame Adélaïde. Of all his daughters, Louis XV. preferred Madame Henriette, and it was Madame Henriette who most resembled her father. She was born in 1727, and in 1739 it became a question of finding her a husband. She had been brought up with the Duc de Chartres; they were deeply attached to each other, and the king approved of their union, but to the inexpressible grief of the two lovers, he would not consent to their marriage. In addition to loving each other passionately, there was another

a horse which was waiting for her. She was just leaving the chateau of Versailles when she was caught. Questioned on the subject, she said that she wished to place herself at the head of the king's troops, to beat the English, and to lead captive the British monarch. Her idea was to invite the chiefs to share her couch—an honour they would not have refused—and to kill them one after the other. Voltaire in a letter to the King of Prussia, 16th November, 1743, mentions this anecdote of our modern Judith, which is also chronicled by the Duc de Luynes.

serious reason for joining this pair in the bonds of holy matrimony. The union of France and Spain under the same crown was still dreaded as a possible contingency, and as d'Argenson observes, nothing would have better persuaded Europe of the pacific tendencies of Louis XV. than a marriage showing that he was determined to substitute the Orleans rather than the Spanish branch to the dauphin.

However, Cardinal Fleury had not been consulted in this matter; the marriage had been settled without his knowledge, and he determined to thwart what he considered a Court intrigue prejudicial to his authority. Then he hated the Orleans family, and feared the importance which it would acquire by such a union. He therefore impressed upon his old pupil that Madame Henriette might make a far more brilliant match, and he proposed the Duke of Savoy as her husband. Negotiations were opened on this subject with the King of Sardinia, but, to the mortification of the cardinal, the King of Sardinia refused to lend himself to the scheme, on the plea that he did not wish his son to marry so soon, the fact being that he preferred remaining on good terms with Spain, from which power he had much to hope, and that he distrusted France.

Defeated as regards the Duke of Savoy, the cardinal next proposed a double match—that the Duc de Chartres should marry a daughter of the Elector of Bavaria, and that Madame Henriette should be reserved for the Emperor of Austria, as

the empress could not possibly live longer than six months. "It would be a grand thing," he said, "for the House of France to furnish heirs to that of Austria, which is already considered extinct." To this d'Argenson objected that a marriage with the emperor would get France into trouble with the rest of Europe, especially with Germany and Spain. "When," he exclaimed, "will people renounce the idea of forming solid alliances by means of marriage?"

Not only was the King of Sardinia disinclined to the matrimonial alliance with France, but the Elector of Bavaria returned a cold and evasive answer to the overtures made by the cardinal. In fact, instead of the Duc de Chartres, the Elector also destined his daughter for the emperor.

Thwarted in Sardinia and Bavaria, the cardinal was destined to be thwarted in Austria also, for in 1740 the emperor died. He then proposed a match between Madame Henriette and the Elector, who claimed the imperial throne, and that the Duc de Chartres should marry Madame Adélaïde, the third daughter of Louis XV.

However, before any of these matrimonial schemes had time to ripen the cardinal himself expired. His policy in one particular point triumphed after his death. He knew that the Duke of Orleans was in a hurry to marry his son, for two reasons: he himself wished to retire to a monastery and renounce the pomp and vanity of this wicked world; and he was afraid of his son indulging in mortal sin and taking a mistress.

The Duke of Orleans, however, did not show himself unduly impatient, but when Louis XV., after the death of the cardinal, still withheld his consent to the union with Madame Henriette, he married his son to Louise Henriette de Bourbon-Conti, pretty, well-made, with 50,000 crowns a year, and about the same age as the duke. The nuptial ceremony was performed by the Cardinal de Rohan, Grand Almoner to the king, in the chapel of Versailles, in the presence of the king, the queen, the dauphin, Madame Henriette, and the rest of the royal family. A good many tears had been shed by the two lovers before the wedding; but as we learn that shortly afterwards the Duc de Chartres and his wife adored each other, and that the Court considered their conjugal tenderness ridiculous and almost a scandal, it is clear that the grief on the side of the duke was of short duration. Nor did the married bliss of this pair last long, for in 1749 d'Argenson gave a sad account of both the duke and the duchess—the duke wasting his substance in riotous living, frequenting the society of men and women of low character, drinking, neglecting all his duties, refusing to pay his creditors, and never returning home until daylight appeared. “The duchess,” added d'Argenson, “has still the same lover, and several others,” and the consequences were soon apparent.

And two years later—

“18th November, 1751.—The Duc de Chartres told his wife at Fontainebleau that he would not

allow her to see the young Melfort,¹ her lover, any more, or else he would shut her up in a convent. This prince menaced Monsieur Melfort more violently. The princess is exceedingly angry, and refuses to dine with her husband. She is *enceinte*, and this will give the French reason to suspect that the child is not a Bourbon."

Then—30th November—"The Duc de Chartres is mollified ; he sees his wife again, and speaks to her ; he has even received the Duc de Melfort at his house, touching the affairs of his regiment. Oh, folly ! Oh, weakness ! This thoroughly dishonours him."

The conduct of the Duc de Chartres so sadly distressed Madame Henriette that she at first refused to believe the reports circulated concerning him, and repaired to the Abbey of St. Geneviève, where his father had shut himself up, to question him on the matter. The Duke of Orleans, who at first could hardly reply to her anxious inquiries, at last with many tears and sighs had to acknowledge the truth of the evil reports which had reached her ears. She returned to Versailles, fell ill, and her paleness so shocked the king that she was ordered to rouge. "It is difficult to imagine the difference which rouge makes in the face of Madame," wrote the Duc de Luynes. But had she painted an inch thick, that could not have saved her ; she pined rapidly away, and died at the age of twenty-four years, deeply

¹ Louis Hector, Count of Drummond Melfort, Lieutenant-General in the French service.

regretted by the king, and indeed by all the royal family.

According to d'Argenson, the Duke of Orleans refused on his death-bed to acknowledge the children of the Duc de Chartres, or at all events of his wife.

The marquis wrote—

“3rd March, 1752.—It appears certain that the Duke of Orleans died without receiving the last sacraments of the Church, or at least extreme unction, for he frequently confessed to his private confessor and went to church to receive the communion. Being in bed for two days before his death the archbishop of Paris came to him with a curé and several other persons, and, the Duc de Chartres being present, exhorted him to recognize his grandson and his granddaughter, and to give them his blessing. He declared that he would never acknowledge them, and that he could not speak contrary to his conscience. He was refused the sacraments on this account; the dying man replied that, the minister of the Church refusing him this consolation, God would take other things into account. He died after expressing these sentiments; those present promised never to say anything about the matter, but by degrees the secret transpired.”

To return to the other sisters. We may remark that Louis XV. invariably evinced the greatest affection for his daughters. If he did not wish to have any more it was possibly with an eye to economy, for we find that each of these royal ladies was destined

to cost the State £40,000 a year. However, when the country had been reduced to the verge of bankruptcy; when the king sent a portion of his plate to the mint, and invited his liege subjects to follow his example, the Duc de Luynes tells us that *Mesdames* wrote a collective letter to his Majesty, assuring him that they would submit to any sacrifice, even should they be reduced to what was strictly necessary.

In the following letter will be found an amusing description of the state of Versailles at this epoch, and the irksome duties which *Mesdames* and the other members of the royal family were called upon to perform.

HORACE WALPOLE TO JOHN CHUTE.

“*Paris, 3rd October, 1765.*”

“Versailles, like everything else, is a mixture of parade and poverty. . . . You will perceive that I have been presented. The queen took great notice of me; none of the rest said a syllable. You are let into the king’s bedchamber just as he has put on his shirt; he dresses and talks good-humouredly to a few, glares at strangers,¹ goes to mass—to dinner—a-hunting. The good old queen is at her dressing-table attended by two or three old ladies, who are languishing to be in Abraham’s bosom, as the only man’s bosom to whom they can hope for admittance. Thence you go to the dauphin, for all is done in an hour. He scarce stays a minute; indeed, poor creature! he is a ghost, and cannot possibly last three months. The dauphiness is in her bed-chamber, but dressed and

¹ Alfieri says in his *Memoirs*—“Although I was warned that the king did not speak to ordinary foreigners, I could not stomach the Olympian Jupiter with which Louis XV. eyed from head to foot in the most impassible manner the persons presented; whereas, if an ant were presented to a giant, the giant, having looked at the insect, would smile or perhaps say—‘Oh! what a little animalcule!’

? At least if he held his peace his face would express that much.”

standing ; looks cross, is not civil, and has the true Westphalian grace and accents. The four *Mesdames*, who are clumsy, plump old wenches, with a bad likeness to their father, stand in a bed-chamber in a row, with black caps and knotting-bags, looking good-humoured, [not knowing what to say, and wriggling as if they wanted to make water. This ceremony too is very short ; then you are carried to the dauphin's three boys [three kings to be], who, you may be sure, only bow and stare. The Duke of Berry (afterwards Louis XVI.) looks weak and weak-eyed ; the Count de Provence (afterwards Louis XVIII.) is a fine boy ; the Count d'Artois (afterwards Charles X.) well enough. The whole concludes with seeing the dauphin's little girl dine, who is as round and as fat as a pudding."

As regards the intimacy which reigned between the king and his daughters—an intimacy which gave rise to the most scandalous reports, for which there was not the slightest foundation—we may mention that after the death of Madame Henriette, her sister [Madame Adélaïde, who succeeded her in the affections of their father, lived in the apartment which communicated with those of the king by means of a secret staircase. The king paid her a visit every morning, often bringing with him the coffee which he had made himself. Madame Adélaïde rang a bell, which warned Madame Victoire of the arrival of his Majesty ; Madame Victoire rang for Madame Sophie, and Madame Sophie for Madame Louise, and a few minutes later the four sisters were talking and laughing with the king. It was during these intimate reunions that *Mesdames*, in accordance with the very general custom, received the strange nicknames of *Loque*, or *Torchon*, applied to Madame Adélaïde ; of *Graille*, applied to Madame Sophie ; of *Coche*, applied

to Madame Victoire ; and of *Chiffe*, applied to Madame Louise. In a letter to her friend the Comtesse de Civrac, we find Madame Adélaïde saying—"The great princess *Madame Torchon*, who writes to you . . ."

Madame du Deffand tells an amusing story, concerning, not a morning, but an evening, which Louis XV. spent with his daughters. In a letter dated 28th October, 1767, she says—"This is what happened (about a week ago. The king, after supper, went to pay a visit to Madame Victoire ; he called a groom in waiting and gave him a letter, saying—'Jacques, take this to the Duc de Choiseul, and let him send it at once to the Bishop of Orleans.' Jacques went in quest of the duke, and was told that he had gone to pay a visit to the Duc de Penthièvre, at whose house he found him. The Duc de Choiseul took charge of the royal missive and gave it to Cadet, the first footman of the duchess, with orders to hunt up the bishop and to let him know the result without loss of time. Cadet returned about an hour and a half afterwards, saying that he had been to Monsignor's house, and had knocked at the door with all his might without being able to gain admittance ; he had then searched the town through but had failed to obtain any clue as to the whereabouts of the prelate. Upon this the duke determined to go himself to the (apartment of the said bishop ; he had to ascend a hundred and twenty-eight steps, and he thundered furiously at the door until a domestic came, in his night-shirt, and opened it. 'Where is the bishop ?'

He had been in bed ever since ten o'clock. 'Open the door for me.' The bishop wakes up. 'Who is there?'—'It is me, with a letter from the king?'—'Oh! my God, what o'clock is it?'—'Two o'clock.'—'I can't read without my spectacles.'—'Where are they?'—'In my breeches.' While the minister was looking for the nether garment, they both wondered what the letter could possibly contain. Was the Archbishop of Paris dead? Had some bishop hung himself? Both of them felt rather uneasy." The bishop took the letter; the minister offered to read it; the bishop thought it more prudent to read it himself first; he could not manage this, and returned it to the minister, who read as follows—

"Monsignor the Bishop of Orleans, my daughters wish to have some *cotignac*; ¹ they desire very small boxes; send for some if you have none; I beg you" (at this spot in the letter there was the sketch of a sedan-chair) "to send at once to your episcopal town in search of some; and let the boxes be very small. Upon which, M. the Bishop of Orleans, may God have you in His holy keeping.

(Signed)

"LOUIS.

"P.S.—The sedan-chair does not mean anything; it was drawn by one of my daughters on this sheet of paper which was at hand."

One can imagine the astonishment of the Duc de Choiseul and the poor drowsy old bishop at being disturbed thus early in the morning to satisfy a whim on the part of *Mesdames*.

Although *Mesdames* deplored the immorality of their father, and were devout, they are said to have rather favoured than otherwise the advent of Madame

¹ A marmalade made of quinces, for which the town of Orleans is celebrated.

du Barry, and this owing to their hatred of Choiseul, who was not to be pardoned for his quarrels with the dauphin, their brother, and for the expulsion of the Jesuits.

When the Revolution began to display itself, *Mesdames* thought of leaving the country with other *émigrés*, but Louis XVI. implored them not to abandon him; the queen too, with tears in her eyes, said—"I am sure that your departure will be imputed to me by the public." They consented to remain, and they would probably have remained to the end had the king not signed the civil constitution of the clergy. This decree was too much for their pious souls. There was something too revolting in the idea of priests being reduced to the condition of public functionaries. The king was looked upon by the clerical party as a heretic, and at St. Cyr, at Chelles, at Val de Grâce, and at the Carmelites, prayers of forty hours were offered up for his conversion. The abolition of titles, the destruction of the nobility, and other daring novelties, raised on the ruins of the ancient *régime*, might be pardoned, but not the civil constitution of the clergy. The country which could sanction such a measure was no longer inhabitable, and *Mesdames* determined to leave it to its fate. They would seek refuge at Rome—that is to say, the two who remained—*Mesdames Adélaïde et Victoire*; Madame Sophie had died in 1752, and Madame Louise, after praying for her father for ten years at the Carmelites, had died also.

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No sooner was it known in Paris that *Mesdames* had taken their departure, than all kinds of sinister rumours were circulated; it was said that *Monsieur* (the Comte de Provence) was also bent upon taking flight, and that the design of the royal family was, by isolating Louis XVI., to force him to leave France, or declare himself the enemy of those who were determined to defend the ancient *régime*. The departure of *Mesdames* was looked upon as the commencement of a general movement, and the rumour was that they were carrying away with them an immense sum of money in gold, and that the dauphin was to be hidden in the boot of their carriage. The clubs, the districts, the municipality, and the "ladies of the market" were in a perfect ferment. The projects of the Court were denounced to the Jacobins; the Abbé Mulot, President of the Municipal Council, presented an address to the Assembly, asking it to interfere and prevent the aunts of the king from joining the enemies of the country. Mirabeau, who presided over the National Assembly, replied to the address, which he said should be taken into consideration. He spoke about social liberty as a principle which was the safeguard of them all; but there were exceptions. He assured the deputation that no matter what the conduct of those who surrounded Louis XVI., that monarch, who was engaged in repairing the faults of his predecessors, could not be isolated, for a great people had become his family.

Abbé Mulot next went to the Tuileries, where he presented an address to the king, which had all the character of a remonstrance, and highly offended his Majesty. He replied that his aunts, being their own — mistresses, had a perfect right to go where they — pleased, adding that there was not the slightest reason for anxiety as to the motives of their journey.

Mesdames left furtively on the 19th February, 1791, at ten p.m., and the next day the “ladies of the market,” who thought that they were still at Bellevue, arrived in order to call upon them not to leave. They were informed that *Mesdames* with a suite of twenty persons were already on the road to Rome. The news of their departure caused such a commotion in Paris that Louis XVI. deemed it expedient to announce the fact to the National Assembly, and this he did in the following letter:—

“GENTLEMEN—Having learned that the National Assembly had appointed a Committee to examine a question relative to the proposed journey of my aunts, I consider it right to inform the Assembly that I heard this morning that they left yesterday evening at ten o’clock. As I am persuaded that they cannot be deprived of the liberty which belongs to every one to go where he wishes, I did not think it my duty or in my power to place any obstacle in their way, although I much regret the separation.

“LOUIS.”

The *Chronique de Paris*, which passed for the best

newspaper in the capital, blurted out all the truth in the following paragraph—"Two princesses, sedentary by profession, by age, and by taste, are suddenly seized with a mania for travelling; it is strange . . . but it is possible. It is said that they are going to kiss the Pope's slipper; it is funny . . . but it is edifying."

Louis XVI. informed Cardinal de Bernis, then French ambassador at Rome, of the approaching visit of *Mesdames*, and everything possible was done by the Minister of the Interior to secure their safe passage to the frontier. However, they were several times stopped on the road, and at the stage beyond Fontainebleau the crowd cried, *à la lanterne*, and but for the arrival of a squadron of Chasseurs commanded by the Comte de Ségur, *Mesdames* would probably have ended their career by dangling from a lamp-post. After many exciting adventures, the fugitives reached Turin, where they found the Comte d'Artois, and after a short stay in that city, they continued their journey to Rome, where the Pope received them in the most magnificent manner. In Rome they remained until the French army under General Bonaparte invaded the Royal States; they then fled to Naples, from whence, however, they were driven away by the Republican forces in 1798. From Naples they crossed over to Manfredonia, where they were to embark for Trieste, and suffered great hardships during the journey, being overtaken by a heavy snowstorm. On reaching the coast, they could not find the frigate on which they were to

have sailed, and after appealing for aid to Nelson and to the admirals in command of the Prussian and the Portuguese fleets, they continued their flight before they could receive an answer, so frightened were they of falling into the hands of the French. At length they embarked on board a small craft called a *trabaccolo*, in which sixty persons were huddled together. *Mesdames* had a small cabin with two beds, the lady's-maids sleeping on the floor. They remained in this floating prison for thirty-one days without undressing, living on salt fish, Albanian bread, and hard biscuit. In addition to this, the sailors were continually threatening to abandon them unless their salaries were raised. At last they got on board a Russian frigate, which conveyed them to Corfou, the weather being so bad that they took a fortnight, instead of thirty-six hours, to reach their destination. After reposing themselves for a few weeks, *Mesdames* continued their journey on board a Portuguese ship, escorted by two Russian frigates, and reached Trieste on the 19th May, 1799, after wandering about for five months, and enduring fatigues and privations they were in no way fitted to support. In fact Madame Victoire died from exhaustion eighteen days after she landed, and Madame Adélaïde followed her to the grave six months later. They were both buried in the Cathedral of Trieste; but in 1817, when Louis XVIII. was king, he had their remains removed to France, and the two unfortunate sisters now repose in the same tomb at St. Denis.

CHAPTER XVII.

MARIE ANTOINETTE.

THE marriage of the dauphin with Marie Antoinette was, as we know, the work of the Duc de Choiseul, and was intended to supplement the Family Compact. Austria, and also Italy, by means of matrimonial alliances, were to be brought into close connection with France and Spain. In pursuit of this policy the following marriages, in addition to that of the dauphin and Marie Antoinette, were arranged. The Grand Duke of Tuscany was to marry Maria Louisa, the daughter of the King of Spain; and the Prince of Asturias, a daughter of the Duke of Parma; the Duke of Parma and his cousin the King of Naples were to marry two daughters of Maria Theresa; the Comtes de Provence and d'Artois were to marry two princesses of the House of Savoy; and their sister, Marie Clotilde, the eldest son of the King of Sardinia. In this way France, Spain, Austria, and Italy were to stand united for their mutual benefit. The Hapsburg alliance was certainly not popular in France, which had so long regarded Austria as the hereditary enemy, but it found favour in the sight of the Duc de Choiseul, who was

not only a Lorrainer, but had been for some time French ambassador to the Court of Vienna, and was half Austrian at heart. The traditional policy of Henri IV. and of Richelieu was therefore to be reversed, to the detriment of the Protestant Powers and Russia.

By the end of 1769 everything had been settled for the marriage of the dauphin and Marie Antoinette. We read in Bachaumont under date—

“30th *January*, 1770.—The carriages of the dauphiness are the attraction of the day; they will shortly be packed up to be sent to Vienna. They consist of two *berlines*, much larger than ordinary carriages, but smaller than those of the king. They contain four places. One is covered with crimson velvet, the four seasons being embroidered in gold on the principal panels; the other is covered with blue velvet, on which the elements are represented. . . .”

And, in fact, the taste of the Duke de Choiseul, who ordered these superb equipages, was highly praised.

Marie Antoinette was received by the French authorities on an island on the Rhine near Strasburg, and was escorted to Versailles with great pomp, Louis XV. and the dauphin going as far as Compiègne to meet her.

Bachaumont informs us that on the—

“13th *April*.—The city has redoubled the preparations for the *fêtes* which it proposes to give on the occasion of the marriage of the dauphin. The Place Louis XV. (now Place de la Concorde) has been cleared. . . . The Boulevards are to be illuminated with three hundred and sixty lanterns with reflectors, which will give a very brilliant light. This will harmonize with the free fair, which is to last nine days, and to reach from the gate of St. Honoré to the gate of St. Antoine.”

The marriage was celebrated with unusual splendour on the 15th May, and Bachaumont thus describes the bride—

“This princess is of a height according to her age, slight, without being bony, like a young person not quite formed. She is very well made and well-proportioned in all her members. Her hair is fair, and will probably assume an ashy tone. She has a handsome forehead ; the form of her face is a fine oval, rather long ; her eyebrows are thick ; her eyes are blue, and full of vivacity and intelligence ; her nose is aquiline and rather thin at the end ; the mouth is small ; the lips, especially the lower one, thick ; her complexion is of dazzling whiteness, and having a natural colour, she can dispense with rouge ; her carriage is that of an archduchess, but her dignity is tempered with sweetness, and it is difficult, on seeing this princess, not to be animated by a feeling of respect mingled with tenderness.”

“19th May.—All those persons who entered the apartments on the day of the marriage, and, above all, those who saw the royal banquet, agree that there never was such a miraculous sight. They declare that any descriptions they might be tempted to undertake would remain far below the truth, and that those contained in fairy tales can give but an imperfect idea of the reality. The richness and luxury of the costumes, the glittering of diamonds, the magnificence of the locality, dazzled the spectators and hindered them from seeing details.”

And on the 21st, Bachaumont related how Ruggieri had determined to excel his rival Torre in the matter of fireworks, “feeling that his honour was at stake.” Bachaumont had some doubts as to his success in consequence of want of space.

On the 24th we find a *bon mot* by the Abbé Terray, who replied when asked by the king what he thought of the *fêtes* at Versailles—*Ah ! Sire, impayables !* And in fact, with France on the verge of bankruptcy, the

Minister of Finance hardly knew where the money to pay for these *fêtes* was to come.

The *fêtes* lasted for two weeks, cost an enormous sum of money, and terminated with a catastrophe of the most terrible description, on the 30th May. The grand display of fireworks announced by Bachaumont took place on the Place Louis XV., and had nearly ended when some rockets accidentally caught fire; there was a panic on the part of the spectators in the Place, and a rush to escape, while numbers of persons descended the Champs Elysées to see what had happened. A great many lives were lost; carriages were upset and were crushed by the weight of people clambering upon them, in order to escape being trodden under-foot; horses were stifled to death; the troops who were on duty were unable to render any service; their muskets were broken, and they were swept away by the torrent. In a few minutes Paris is said to have resembled a city taken by assault. Joy was turned into mourning. The most exaggerated rumours prevailed the next day with regard to the extent of this public calamity. The Parliament ordered a report to be made upon the subject, from which it appeared that forty-three men and eighty-nine women had lost their lives; that no one was crushed by a carriage or trampled to death by horses, and that most of the victims perished standing.

It were needless to dwell on the general consternation caused by this catastrophe, and the grief, especially of the dauphin and the dauphiness, for the

sufferers, and how everything possible was done for their relief.

What was the reception accorded to Marie Antoinette by the Court of Versailles? Louis XV. treated her with a certain amount of kindness; by Madame Adélaïde she was nicknamed *L'Autrichienne*, and in fact all the king's daughters, who hated the Duc de Choiseul and his works, viewed her presence with displeasure. The dauphin, a rough, unmannerly, and ungainly youth, who cared for nothing but sport, treated her coldly, and his two brothers, the Comtes de Provence and d'Artois, showed themselves unfriendly and jealous. The whole Jesuit party naturally regarded her with marked hostility. Her position was therefore one of extreme difficulty. She had no one to lean upon but the Count of Mercy Argenteau, the Abbé de Vermond, and the Duc de Choiseul; and the year after her marriage the Duc de Choiseul was driven from office. No wonder that she remained Austrian at heart, and bore ever in her mind the last portion of her mother's advice: "Do not adopt much French frivolity; remain a good German woman, and glory in it."

That Marie Antoinette had many faults and made herself many enemies there can be no doubt. Her early education had been sadly neglected, and this is all the more strange seeing how anxious Maria Theresa afterwards became, that she should devote a certain time every day to study. In her letters she frequently blamed her daughter for her love of pleasure,

exhorting her to read, read, read. As soon as the match with the dauphin was arranged, the Duc de Choiseul despatched the Abbé de Vermond to Vienna to replace the actors Aufresne and Stainville, who had been engaged to teach the Archduchess French; and the abbé, who soon became the devoted servant of the empress, found her a very indifferent pupil. She was exceedingly indolent, though by no means deficient in intelligence. She was very quick to seize the humorous side of a question, and was fond of turning the etiquette of the Court into ridicule, to the great horror of her aunts and the Duchesse de Noailles. With all this she knew how to impose respect when it became necessary. To her love of gambling and other failings we shall have occasion to refer anon, and shall merely add here that she was endowed with a most kindly disposition, as is shown by such anecdotes as the following:—A groom in the service of the Comtesse de Provence was thrown from his horse; the countess drove on, but the dauphiness stopped her carriage and remained with the injured man until a surgeon arrived. A man was killed by a stag which was being pursued by the royal hounds. The wife of the victim, who witnessed the accident, fainted away; the dauphiness alighted from her carriage, helped to restore her, and gave directions that she should be provided for. To reach the spot where a stag had been brought to bay it would have been necessary for the dauphiness to have ridden through a field of corn; this she refused

to do. A mother appealed to the dauphiness on behalf of her son, who had been condemned to death; when told that the poor woman had first of all applied to the Comtesse du Barry, she replied, "Ah! if I were a mother, I would throw myself at the feet of Zamora¹ to save my son."

Both in her own correspondence with her mother, and also in that which constantly passed between Maria Theresa and the Austrian Ambassador in France, the Count of Mercy Argenteau, one can catch many glimpses into the private life of the unfortunate Queen of France, and how she was made to serve Austrian interests.² When Maria Theresa sent her daughter to France she evidently dreaded the dangers to which she would be exposed from her inexperience, and she drew up several pages of instructions for her guidance. Not only this, but every courier from France was to bring her a letter from her daughter, and also three classes of documents from Mercy Argenteau:—1. the official correspondence; 2. private and secret information, which she could show to her son Joseph II. or to her faithful old minister, the Prince de Kaunitz; 3. on separate sheets more intimate and confidential reports for her eye alone. Mercy Argenteau not only reported every incident in the daily existence of Marie

¹ The negro servant of Madame du Barry.

² Correspondence of Marie Thérèse, Marie Antoinette, and Mercy Argenteau, by the Chevalier D'Arneth. The Count of Mercy Argenteau died in London in 1794, when his papers were sent to Vienna.

Antoinette to the empress, but he often advised the former as to the replies which she should address to her mother. Strange to say, the secret correspondence between Maria Theresa and the Austrian ambassador appears to have been carried on for ten years without Marie Antoinette ever suspecting it, though she was often much puzzled to know how certain information managed to reach Vienna, and could only accuse "those cursed spies of Frederick the Great, who deluged Europe with their calumnies." No one in France, with the exception of the Abbé de Vermond, and no one in Austria, except Joseph II., Kaunitz, the private secretary the Baron Pichler, and now and then Prince Starkenberg, the minister of Maria Theresa in the Low Countries, knew anything of the secret correspondence; no one save Baron Pichler was aware of the existence of the "most secret" despatches; and even the baron, who wrote under the dictation of the empress, was not aware of the additions which Maria Theresa made with her own hand in the margin.

Baron d'Arneth considers it astonishing that this secret should have been so well kept, seeing how unsafe the post was, how easy it was to tamper with the fidelity of cabinet couriers, and with what inconceivable dexterity diplomatic *espionnage* was practised in the 18th century.

The despatch of couriers appears to have been thus established. A courier started from Vienna at the commencement of each month, stopped in Brussels to

deliver despatches, and arrived in Paris in nine or ten days; the return courier left Paris on the 15th, and was due in Vienna on the 25th of each month. Sometimes special couriers were despatched, but only on very solemn occasions, and we see that for several months after the death of Louis XV. the number of couriers was doubled to satisfy the anxiety of the empress as to the march of events in France. The couriers charged with the letters of Maria Theresa, although picked men, did not receive their despatches until they were in the saddle ready to start; in fact, everything possible was done to secure secrecy. It may be added that the despatches in question are all written in French, and if at times the style of the empress is not correct, it is always clear, vigorous, and to the point.

From this correspondence between Maria Theresa, Marie Antoinette, and the Count of Mercy Argenteau, we have made the following selections—

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“PARIS, 15th June.

“ . . . The king continues to be highly satisfied with the dauphiness; she caresses him always *à propos*, with grace, and in the most touching manner. The king (as he did me the honour to tell me one day) finds her ‘lively and rather childish,’ but, added he, ‘that is in keeping with her age’ [not fifteen yet]. *Mesdames* are enchanted with the dauphiness, and Court and public praise her affability and tact in saying something gracious to all who approach her. . . . However, I must admit, without allowing myself to be dazzled by the well-merited success of the dauphiness, I reflect that in the midst of a frivolous nation and a tempestuous Court it is much more easy to win admiration at first than to preserve it for any time. In order to succeed, the dauphiness must observe small

details, among which one of the most essential is that of holding herself well, and this she sometimes forgets when sitting at meals or playing at *cavagnol*. Often her *ajustements* are disarranged by the little games in which she has been indulging during the day ; however, I must say that at church the archduchess behaves with the greatest decorum."

Count Mercy, after mentioning that the dauphiness had a trick of laughing at things she considered ridiculous, which was dangerous in a princess who knew how to season her observations in an exceedingly piquant manner, went on to remark—"After all that the dauphiness tells me, I see that she has unravelled the character and qualities of the persons who surround her with a sagacity really astonishing for her age. . . . Madame du Barry considered it her duty to pay her respects to H. R. H. one morning ; she received her without affectation, and everything passed off in a dignified manner. . . ."

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

"9th July, 1770.

"The king is exceedingly kind to me, and I love him tenderly, but his weakness for Madame du Barry fills one with pity. She is the most foolish and impertinent creature you can imagine. She played every evening with us at Marly ; twice she was next me, but she did not speak to me, nor did I attempt to open conversation with her. However, when it was necessary I spoke to her. As for my dear husband, he has altered much to his advantage. He is very friendly, and begins to have confidence in me. He certainly does not like the Duc de la Vauguyon,¹ but he fears him [as Louis XV. feared Cardinal Fleury]. The other day a curious adventure. I was alone with my husband, when M. de la Vauguyon

¹ Governor of the dauphin and his brothers. A bigot who was opposed to the Austrian alliance, and who hated the Duc de Choiseul for persecuting the Jesuits.

approached the door to listen. A *valet-de-chambre*, either a dolt or a very honest man, suddenly threw the door open, and there was the duke posted like a sentinel unable to retire. I pointed out to my husband the inconvenience of listening at doors, and this he took in good part. . . . I forgot to say that I wrote yesterday to the king for the first time. I was very much frightened, knowing that Madame du Barry reads all his letters. But you may be persuaded, my very dear mother, that I shall commit no fault either for or against her."

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

"CHOISY, 12th July.

" . . . Our departure for Choisy was delayed for a day, as my husband had a cold with fever. However, he recovered the next day, having slept twelve hours and a half at a stretch. . . . Your Majesty is very good to take so much interest in me, and to wish to know how I pass the day. I get up between nine and ten o'clock, and, having dressed, I say my prayers; then I breakfast, and after that I go to see my aunts, where I generally find the king. This takes until half-past ten; afterwards, at eleven, I have my hair dressed. At noon I receive, and every one can enter but common people. I put on my rouge, and wash my hands in public; then the gentlemen retire, the ladies remain, and I dress before them. At noon mass is performed. When the king is at Versailles I go with him, my husband, and my aunts to mass. If he is not there I go alone with the dauphin, and always at the same hour. After mass we two dine together in public, but that is all over at half-past one, for we both eat very quickly. Afterwards I go to the apartment of the dauphin, and if he has business to attend to I return to mine. I read, I write, or I work, for I am making a waistcoat for the king, which does not make great progress, but I trust, with the grace of God, that it will be finished in a few years. At three o'clock I go to visit my aunts, and the king comes at that hour. At four o'clock the abbé (de Vermond) comes to see me, and from five to six every day the music-master. At 6.30 I generally return to my aunts when I do not go out walking. You must know that my husband nearly always goes with me to see my aunts. At seven there is play until nine, but when it is fine I go out. At nine we have supper, and when the king is absent my aunts come and sup with me; but when he is not absent we sup

with them. We wait for the king, who usually arrives at 10.30, but while waiting I lie down on a sofa and go to sleep until the king comes. When he is away we go to bed at eleven o'clock. . . . I beg you will pardon me, my dear mother, if my letter is too long and is soiled, but I took two days to write it, on my toilette table, having no other time at my disposal. . . . I must now finish, having to dress myself for the king's mass. . . ."

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

"PARIS, 14th July, 1770.

"SACRED MAJESTY,—On Sunday, the 8th of the month, the dauphin and the dauphiness had some very sharp words. I have not been informed how the matter began, but the result was that the dauphin informed the archduchess that he was not ignorant of anything concerning the marriage state, that from the commencement he had laid down a plan from which he would not depart, and that at Compiègne he would live with the dauphiness in all due intimacy. . . ."

And then ensued a violent squabble about the Du Barry and her *protégés*, the dukes of Aiguillon and Vauguyon, on one side, and Madame de Pompadour and her *protégé*, the Duc de Choiseul, on the other.

On the 14th July Mercy reported that the Duc de Vauguyon had been intriguing in order to obtain an ascendancy over the dauphiness, in pursuit of which scheme he had tried to establish friendly relations between the dauphin and Madame du Barry. The dauphin, it appears, had long desired to be admitted to the suppers at St. Hubert, one of the king's hunting lodges. "The Duc de St. Mégrin," said Mercy, "was charged by his father to inform Madame du Barry of the desire of the dauphin; this woman did not fail to make the proposal to the king, who consented, and since that moment the dauphin has taken

part in all the *petits voyages*, has remained to supper, and has been initiated in those parties of pleasure in which the favourite plays the chief part, and where decency is not always scrupulously observed. However, the result of this arrangement had an effect quite the reverse of that intended, for *Mesdames*, fearing the danger that the dauphin would run, decided upon acquainting him with the real character of the favourite, the most striking peculiarities of her life, and the scandal which her presence at Court occasioned. This information made so strong an impression on the mind of the dauphin, that since that time he has frequently exhibited marks of aversion towards the Comtesse du Barry, who will certainly never be rehabilitated in the mind of the young prince. . . .

“During the last visit to Marly the dauphiness was placed in a very difficult and delicate position, and behaved with all the prudence possible. Exposed to play every evening at lansquenet with the Comtesse du Barry, and finding herself at times seated next that woman, H. R. H. never allowed the least gesture, capable of being remarked, to escape her. . . . The king continues to be perfectly satisfied with the archduchess, and shows this by all manner of trifling attentions and marks of tenderness. I never cease imploring H. R. H. to be always very caressing towards the king; this is a sure way of captivating him, and should not be neglected. . . .

“The most satisfactory matter concerning the dauphiness is that every day she gains more ascendancy

over the mind of the dauphin. She behaves with so much gaiety and grace that the prince is quite subjugated; he speaks to her in confidence concerning matters which he never before explained to any one. His gloomy and reserved character had rendered him impenetrable up to the present; but the dauphiness makes him tell her all she wishes, and has drawn his secret from him respecting the Duc de Vauguyon. . . .”

On the 4th August, Mercy reported that the dauphin had been attacked with a slight indisposition, and that during the week which H. R. H. spent at Versailles alone with the dauphin she had behaved in the most exemplary manner, nursing the prince her husband, and showing him the greatest attention. But says Mercy further on—“The Comtesse de Noailles did me the honour to tell me that there are no means of inducing the dauphiness to wear stays, and the consequence is that her figure is becoming visibly deformed, and that her right shoulder is out of place. The Comtesse de Noailles said that she had spoken to the king on the subject, but that he had not said and never would say a word to the dauphiness; and she begged me to write your Majesty on the subject. What the countess said about the king is easily believed, for every one knows that his Majesty would never take upon himself to warn his children, or to correct them in any way, and it will be the same with the dauphiness.”

In a letter from Compiègne, dated the 20th August,

Mercy informed the empress that in a conversation with the Duc de Noailles, "who is perhaps the cleverest man in France, and knows his sovereign and the Court better than any one else," his grace, speaking of the dauphiness, said that, "judging by experience, and looking at the qualities of that princess, he was persuaded that she would one day gain ascendancy over the mind of the king; that the tastes of that monarch were weakened by age, that he would return to the bosom of his family in search of happiness, and that it was then that the charms of the dauphiness would exercise all that empire over him to which they were entitled. . . ." "The dauphiness speaks to the dauphin with great frankness, and is never contradicted. The other day she told the prince that the Duc de la Vauguyon and his son the Duc de St. Mégrin were two scamps, whom he ought to distrust. The dauphin shook his head without replying. . . ."

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

"COMPIÈGNE, 20th August, 1770.

" . . . Since the last indisposition of the dauphin, he has not slept as formerly in the apartment of the dauphiness. However, there is no cause for uneasiness on that account, nor any other reason beyond the fact that nature, tardy in the case of the dauphin, has no influence on him, probably because his physical powers have been weakened by too sudden growth; besides, there is nothing in his constitution opposed to him acquiring good and robust health provided that he does not indulge in too violent exercises. This prince finds the archduchess charming; he is pleased with her society, and shows her an amount of attention and gentleness which were not supposed to exist in his character. The dauphiness rules him in all small matters without the slightest contradiction on his part; therefore only a little patience will be required, and everything

will go well; but, as in this country they always want to press forward matters before the time, the king and *Mesdames* talk in a manner which merely serves to agitate the dauphiness and to render her uneasy. I make use of the Abbé de Vermond to calm her. . . .”

The dauphin, like his ancestors, was a mighty hunter, and it was often feared that over-indulgence in his favourite pastime would injure his health. As for his physical powers not being fully developed when he married, we shall find numerous references to that subject in the letters not only of Maria Theresa and Mercy Argenteau, but in those of Marie Antoinette herself, who had to wait for more than seven years before she became a mother, or, as she expressed it, Queen of France. From the very first she acquired an empire over the mind of her husband, who was rather indolent than feeble.

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“PARIS, 19th September.

“ . . . The dauphiness has shown a great desire to ride upon horseback, but seeing the inconveniences of that exercise, I employed all kinds of means to dissuade her. . . . The Duc de Choiseul took this matter in hand, and when the dauphiness asked the king to approve of her project, H. M. declined, but gave her permission to ride a donkey. This compromise did not displease the archduchess. A search was everywhere made for very steady and good-tempered donkeys, and H. R. H. and the ladies of her suite rode out on them in the forest without any danger. . . . On the 21st the promenade was repeated, and *Mesdames*, as well as the Comte de Provence and the Comte d’Artois, joined the party. Crowds flocked into the forest to see the dauphiness, who, each time that she perceived persons of distinction, spoke to them with that kindness and grace which she never loses an opportunity of displaying.”

Mercy seemed rather alarmed about a visit to Chantilly, during which the dauphiness would be brought into contact with Madame du Barry. However his fears were groundless, for he afterwards wrote—"The dauphiness went to Chantilly on the 28th. I have learned from the Duc de Choiseul that H. R. H. behaved herself in the most agreeable manner for the king and for all the persons who took part in the trip, during which nothing remarkable occurred. The archduchess did not find herself placed in a position to be obliged to speak to the Comtesse du Barry, and the latter had no reason to complain. The king appeared extremely satisfied with the dauphiness; he spoke to her a great deal, and showed her attentions the most tender and *recherchées*. . . ."

On the 20th October, Mercy, in a letter of many pages, informed his imperial mistress, among other things, that he and the Abbé de Vermond had had a consultation with regard to the studies of the dauphiness, whose education appears to have been sadly neglected. The ambassador and the abbé came to the conclusion that the dauphiness wanted application, but was sharp; that the "perpetual movement and dissipation of the Court interfered with the proper employment of her time." The count then adds that H. R. H. had at last determined to wear stays, and that the king showed her the most tender friendship, "which may have good effects." In fact, Mercy delivered it as his opinion that if the dauphiness could only persuade the king to visit her

every day, and would amuse H. M., he would give up bad society. "I do not despair," he continues, "that the dauphiness will manage to render this important service to France. . . ."

A few days later the count excused the writing and spelling of the archduchess in this wise—"I spoke to the Abbé de Vermond on the subject, and he agreed with me that both left much to be desired; that as for her handwriting it will be difficult to rectify that beyond a certain point; but that as concerned the orthography he would redouble his efforts. Upon this he informed me that the dauphiness never writes so badly as when she writes to your Majesty. The reason is that she does not consider her letters safe, and she consequently waits until the courier is ready to start, before writing. She is then in such a hurry that her letters are filled with faults caused by precipitation."

With regard to the safety of her letters, Mercy, after due inspection of her premises, informed the dauphiness that it would be sufficient for her to keep her writing-case locked and the key in her pocket.

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

"FONTAINEBLEAU, 20th October, 1770.

" . . . H. R. H. stated that the dauphin had promised to sleep in her apartment on the 20th September. The archduchess was much pleased with this promise, and confided it to *Mesdames* Adélaïde and Sophie and to the Comtesse de Narbonne. They, on their side, confided it to every one, and it became the news of the day. Madame Adélaïde joined to this indiscretion that of exhorting the dauphin, who was so frightened that he failed to keep his

word. He renewed his promise for the 10th of this month, confided it to *Mesdames*, and did not keep it. . . .”

Mercy then relates how he mentioned the rumour to the dauphiness, saying that it was no doubt false, as had such a promise been made it would never have been confided to any one. The dauphiness felt somewhat abashed, and acknowledged her indiscretion, upon which Mercy said—“I impressed upon her that the ‘intimacy’ of marriage is a sacred secret, the violation of which cannot be excused, and that an indiscretion of this kind might destroy all confidence between husband and wife, and produce a very bad impression on the public; that, above all, seeing the timid character of the dauphin, it was calculated to keep him estranged from her for a long time. I managed to frighten H. R. H. . . . The king has reproached the dauphin for his coldness, and has questioned him on the subject. The dauphin replied that he found the archduchess charming, that he loved her, but that he required time to conquer his timidity.”

MARIA THERESA TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

“SCHÖNBRUNN, 1st November.

“MADAME, MY DEAR DAUGHTER,—At last the eternal courier has arrived with news. Thank God that your health, as the courier informs me, is good, and that you have grown and got stouter. If you had not reassured me as to your stays, I might have felt uneasy. . . . I beg that you will not allow yourself to become negligent. At your age that is not suitable, especially in your position. It brings with it uncleanness, and indifference in other matters. This is why I torment you, and I cannot sufficiently warn you against defects into which the whole royal family of France have long fallen. They are good, virtuous at heart, but not made for

show, for giving the *ton*, or for amusing themselves innocently. Finding no resources in themselves, they have been obliged to search them elsewhere. . . . I beg of you, as a friend and a tender mother, not to become *nonchalante*. You would regret, though too late, not having followed my advice. Upon this point alone follow neither the example nor the counsels of the family. It is for you to give the *ton* to Versailles. . . . God has given you so much grace, such sweetness and docility, that every one must love you. . . .”

After some coaxing the dauphiness, we see, persuaded the king to allow her to ride on horseback.

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“FONTAINEBLEAU, 13th November.

“ On the 30th the dauphiness went to the meet on horseback. A groom held the horse, and other persons walked alongside of H. R. H., who was greatly pleased by this new exercise. In the evening every one hastened to her circle to appear to share her satisfaction. . . .

“ Not only has the king consented that the dauphiness should ride on horseback ” (which much vexed Mercy), “ but he has signed an ordinance for 80,000 francs for the purchase of saddle-horses. . . . On the 4th the archduchess went out again on horseback. On the 5th she wished to ride again. She can no longer support the idea of riding on donkeys, and there is every appearance that the services of those animals will be dispensed with.

“ For some time the dauphiness has been asking the dauphin not to remain out hunting so late ; and on the 6th she begged him to come back early, so as to be dressed, and not keep the theatre waiting. The dauphin returned late, and, according to custom, long after the king. He found the dauphiness with H. M. He approached her with an embarrassed air and said, ‘ You see I have come back in time.’ The dauphiness replied sharply, ‘ Oh, yes ; a very fine hour.’ They went to the theatre, where the dauphin sulked the whole time. Afterwards there was an ‘ explanation,’ when the dauphiness lectured him energetically, and pointed out with considerable vivacity how wrong he was to lead so retired a life (*vie sauvage*). She remarked that no one in his suite could stand that kind of existence, especially as his rough air and manners afforded no compensation to those who were attached to him ; that by continuing

this mode of life he would ruin his health and cause himself to be detested. The dauphin received this lesson with gentleness and submission, acknowledged his sins, promised to repair them, and formally asked for pardon. . . .

"Sunday was devoted entirely to pious occupations and receptions. The evening terminated with play, and the public supper called *grand couvert*."

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

"VIENNA, 1st December.

"I cannot approve of the expression employed by my daughter in speaking of the Comtesse du Barry. It would be more proper for her not to talk to the dauphin of the conduct of his grandfather [*having no faith in that false prince*]." ¹ The empress also added to the letter of her secretary. ["I must admit that I in no way approve of my daughter riding on horseback. I know my daughter sufficiently well to be persuaded that she will manage to have her own way whenever she desires a thing, and that she will brave a great deal. It is for this reason that I do not waste my influence with her, and that I mingle my remonstrances with a great deal of tenderness. . . ."]

MARIA THERESA TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

"VIENNA, 2nd December.

"They are always highly delighted with you. What happy moments you make me pass, my dear child! . . . You are right in supposing that I do not approve of you riding on horseback at fifteen years of age; your aunts, whom you mention, did not ride until they were thirty. They are *Mesdames*, and not the dauphiness. You say that the king and the dauphin approve, and so I have nothing to say; it is for them to direct you. It is into their hands that I have intrusted my pretty Antoinette. Riding spoils the complexion, and in the long run your figure will feel the effects of it. I declare that if you ride like a man, which I doubt, I find that both dangerous and bad for giving birth to children, and it is by that that your happiness will be assured. If you ride as I do, like a woman, there is less to say against it. . . ."

¹ Maria Theresa often added remarks in her own hand. These we place between brackets.

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

"VIENNA, 4th January, 1771.

"The characters in your last letter, joined to the blackness of the ink, have done good to my eyes, worn out by age and work ; but I should be sorry to hamper you by asking you to change your ordinary way of writing. . . . The *Gazettes* say that when out riding my daughter was thrown from her donkey. Is this true? . . . [I acknowledge that I feel deeply the downfall of the Duc de Choiseul, and I fear we shall experience the consequences. The removal of De Vermond is sure. I regard that as infallible, and also the fall of my daughter. You will not have the same facility for approaching her, and no one will dare to give you the same amount of information. That abominable *clique*¹ will spoil my daughter. . . ."]

And on the 6th January, in a letter to the dauphiness, Maria Theresa said—"Never forget that your marriage was the work of the Choiseuls, and never forget the gratitude which you owe them."

MARIA THERESA TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

"10th February.

". . . I greatly fear that your complexion and your figure will suffer if you ride too much. I beg of you to tell me sincerely if you dance better than you did here. . . . I begin to feel annoyed that you are dauphiness. I fear that the future Comtesse de Provence will be beforehand with you. . . . I must point out that your handwriting becomes worse every day, and less correct ; in ten months you ought to have improved. . . ."

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

"VIENNA, 11th February, 1771.

". . . Although the dauphin continues insensible, I feel reassured by what you write concerning his conduct to my daughter. We must await the *dénouement*. In the meantime I shall feel

¹ The Du Barry-Aiguillon lot.

tranquil as long as I can count upon the union of the married pair ; but I must admit that, seeing the stormy state of the French Court, the situation of my daughter makes me feel most uneasy. Her *nonchalance*, her little taste for serious application, her indiscretion, [effect of her youth and vivacity, her *liaisons* with her aunts, furnish me with more than one subject for alarm].”

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“PARIS, 25th February.

“SACRED MAJESTY,---Nothing has yet come of the projects of the dauphin to live with the dauphiness in the intimacy befitting their union. This conduct, *qui ne tient qu’au moral*, is none the less difficult to explain, and unfortunate. I endeavour by every possible means to remove from the mind of the archduchess all reflection on this subject, pointing out to her the brilliant aspects of her position ; that is to say, the certainty of being loved by the prince, her husband, and of possessing his confidence. The health of H. R. H. is perfect, her whole face is improved ; her figure has been restored by the use of stays, and the dauphiness now observes with sufficient care all that appertains to cleanliness and adornment.”

On the 13th May, Mercy wrote a long account of the doings of the Court at Fontainebleau, where the Comtesse de Provence had just arrived for her marriage. He informed his mistress that the dauphiness was most attentive and affectionate towards the king, who was delighted with her. “Never did she appear so charming, and never was her triumph more complete. The king caressed her a thousand times, and said that he would breakfast with her the next morning ; in fact the monarch arrived on the morrow in his dressing-gown in the bedroom of the dauphiness by a door which had remained closed till then, and by which he would never pass during his last stay at Fontainebleau. The king made his own coffee, and

remained for about two hours, appearing more gay and content than usual."

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

"PARIS, 22nd June.

" . . . For some weeks past the dauphiness has recommenced playing with children, and unfortunately her first lady's-maid has two—that is to say, a boy of about six, and a girl of about twelve years old—both very noisy, dirty, and 'filled with inconveniences.' The archduchess passes a great portion of the day with these children, who spoil her dresses, break the furniture, and throw the apartments into the greatest disorder. What is worse still is, that owing to this amusement the dauphiness has no time for reading, and unless your Majesty writes strongly on the subject, study will be altogether neglected. . . ."

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

"PARIS, 22nd June, 1771.

" I must commence by giving your Majesty an account of an interesting conversation which I had with the Duc d'Aiguillon on Tuesday. After speaking to me about current affairs, he asked me if your Majesty had formed any plans with regard to Madame Marie, sister of the dauphin. I replied that I was not aware of any plans concerning that princess; that if her age had more nearly approached that of the emperor, and if that monarch intended marrying again, I had no doubt but your Majesty would see with pleasure the emperor decide in favour of a princess of the French Royal Family; but that as this last case did not exist, I could not imagine what views your Majesty held with regard to Madame Marie.¹ The minister did not reply, and I suspect that this question had reference to a former overture made on the same subject by the Duc de Choiseul, traces of which remained in his papers. . . ."

¹ The Emperor Joseph II. had already lost two wives—Isabella of Parma, who died in 1763; and Maria Joseph of Bavaria, who died in 1767. Madame Marie Adélaïde was born in 1759.

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

"SCHÖNBRUNN, 8th July.

" There is no indication of the emperor wishing to marry the sister of the dauphin. Independently of the too tender age of that princess, the description given to him of her face and her *embonpoint* are calculated to remove all idea of an alliance [the fact of being French interposes a double obstacle].¹ In fact, I should like to see the ties between our House and that of Bourbon multiplied by this marriage; but I shall never propose any marriage to the emperor. The choice of a wife should be his own work, if he ever thinks of marrying again. . . ."

In reply to this letter Count de Mercy said—

"What it pleases your Majesty to observe concerning the idea of a marriage between the emperor and Madame Marie will serve to direct me in future. This young princess is growing, but her *embonpoint* has not yet diminished, and this is a pity, for she has an agreeable physiognomy, is polished, very amiable, and well brought up, which is very remarkable in the midst of all the difficulties which education has to encounter in a Court like this."

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

"COMPIÈGNE, 24th July.

" . . . The dauphiness has a little fever and a bad cold, which she caught by taking a bath which was too hot and then going out riding. . . . During this time H. R. H. recommenced reading with some appearance of taste; the children were not admitted so frequently. During her slight illness the dauphin treated her with great tenderness. The king went to see the dauphiness several times a day, and remained for a long time with H. R. H., displaying an amount of friendship and ease which shows the liking he has for the archduchess. The progress which this princess makes in the mind of the dauphin is remarkable. On Monday, in presence of the Comte and Comtesse de Provence, the dauphiness administered a reprimand to the dauphin on his immoderate love of hunting,

¹ The emperor was greatly prejudiced against the French.

which ruins his health, and on the air of negligence and roughness which that exercise causes him to contract. The dauphin thought to cut short this reprimand by retiring to his own apartment, but the dauphiness followed him and continued to represent rather strongly all the inconveniences of his way of living. This language had such an effect on the dauphin that he began to cry. The dauphiness mingled her tears with his, and the reconciliation was tender. The archduchess did not forget that the quarrel had commenced in the apartment of Madame de Provence, and led the dauphin back there. Monsieur and Madame de Provence asked if peace had been made, whereupon the dauphin replied with the best grace possible that lovers' quarrels never lasted long."

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

"SCHÖNBRUNN, 10th August, 1771.

" . . . This, in truth, is not the moment to bring forward the marriage of the emperor with Madame Marie ; however, I am very glad to see him put off for some years his intended voyage to France. As the *embonpoint* of the Princess Marie may diminish in the interval, the emperor may change his views concerning her, but this is always a doubtful affair, the success of which I cannot guarantee. . . .

"I am very glad that my daughter begins to treat the Duc d'Aiguillon better. Without enlisting in the cause, she ought to behave in a similar way to the persons of the dominant party, and even towards Madame du Barry, speaking with her upon indifferent subjects as with any other ladies admitted to the Court by the king. She should ignore what this woman is, and treat her well, but without grovelling (*sans bassesses*). In this my daughter must act in accordance with the wishes of the dauphin. Should he object, my daughter will do well to continue to avoid Madame du Barry."

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

"13th October, 1771.

" . . . I am really in despair that you should believe all the falsehoods which they write in preference to what Mercy and I tell you. You believe, then, that we desire to deceive you. I have many reasons for believing that the king himself does not wish me to speak to Madame du Barry, nor has he ever spoken to me on the

subject. He has been much more friendly with me since he knew that I refused, and, if you could see all that passes here, you would know that this woman and her set would not be satisfied with a few words. . . .”

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“FONTAINEBLEAU, 16th November, 1771.

“ . . . For several weeks past the dauphin has quite changed in his manners towards the dauphiness, carrying his attentions to the pitch of gallantry—little caresses, a desire to be always with the dauphiness, and, in fact, all that denotes tenderness. . . . The king being recently in the midst of his family, said in fun that he had no hope of a successor unless the Comte d’Artois gave him one. The dauphin laughed and turned towards Madame Victoire, saying, ‘My father has a very poor opinion of me, but he will soon be disabused.’ In the meantime the dauphiness is tranquil and calm, and has ceased her confidential communications. . . .”

The fact of not being a mother preyed, however, constantly on the mind of Marie Antoinette. In a letter which she wrote to Maria Theresa on the 16th November, she said—“Although the state of the queen makes me often think of mine, I nevertheless share the joy of my dear sister.” The empress had just informed her that the Queen of Naples was *enceinte*. Again, on the 13th June, 1772, Marie Antoinette wrote to her mother—“I await with the greatest impatience news of the queen’s confinement. I greatly blame those persons who have prejudiced her against the midwife. I would intrust myself to any one of them if I could only be certain of ‘arriving there.’ . . .”

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

"21st January, 1772.

" . . . I beg you to believe that I shall always sacrifice my prejudices and my repugnances as long as I am not asked to do anything contrary to honour. It would be the greatest misfortune of my life were a dispute to take place between my two families; my heart would be always for mine, and it would be very difficult to perform my duties here. I shudder at this idea. . . ."¹

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

"PARIS, 15th June, 1772.

" . . . A little episode happened the other day in the royal family, which the dauphiness condescended to confide to me, with orders to keep the matter secret, and not to mention it in my humble reports. A porcelain vase, very artistically worked, stood on the chimney-piece of the Comte de Provence. The dauphin was accustomed to handle it, and this appeared to render the Comte de Provence very nervous. The dauphiness laughed at his fears; and the dauphin, who had the vase in his hands at the time, let it fall, and it was smashed to pieces. The Comte de Provence, in a moment of anger, rushed at the dauphin; they caught hold of each other and exchanged some blows with their fists. The dauphiness had the presence of mind to separate the combatants, and she even received a scratch on the hand. A perfect reconciliation followed this battle; no one saw it, and not the slightest rumour of it has transpired."

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

"PARIS, 15th June.

"SACRED MAJESTY,—My official despatches contain the remarks I have considered it essential to make concerning the sensation created here by the arrangements upon which your Majesty has decided with regard to Poland. It is certain that his Most Christian Majesty looks at matters with an equity and moderation which fully reassure me as to the stability of his sentiments, and his

¹ Hostilities were on the point of breaking out in consequence of the partition of Poland, but the French treasury was empty.

attachment to the alliance. I shall employ with circumspection the permission which your Majesty has given me to hold, from time to time, such language as may confirm the king in his friendship for your Majesty. It will only remain to calm the *amour propre* of the Duc d'Aiguillon, who is personally irritated at the disagreeable part he finds himself obliged to play at the outset of his ministry. I flatter myself that we shall be able to find efficacious means for winning him over. It appears to me that the friendly dispositions of the favourite should not be neglected, and I think it will be important, during the sojourn at Compiègne, that the dauphiness should accord such a favourable reception to Madame du Barry as may enable me to make use of that woman as regards her ascendancy over the king and the minister. The least hint from your Majesty will produce the desirable impression upon the dauphiness, and will no doubt be useful to the welfare of the service. . . ."

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

"18th June.

" I take this opportunity to inform the dauphiness of the happy and consoling news from Naples, which has overwhelmed me with joy. . . . I add a word for my daughter concerning the dauphin. The situation is incomprehensible, and I am astonished that things are allowed to go on as they do without any attention being paid to the matter. . . ."

On the 2nd July Maria Theresa wrote a long letter, in her own hand, in reply to Mercy's letter of the 13th June, and a most interesting document it is. It commenced thus—

"COUNT MERCY,—I have informed my daughter that I have intrusted you with a special commission which interests me greatly, both as sovereign and as mother."

The empress went on to bewail having to act with the Prussians and the Russians, whereas the alliance with France and Spain would have been more natural, and more in conformity with the interests of the Houses of Bourbon and Hapsburg—

"But," she added, "we were not in a position to refuse without running the risk of our very existence. Nothing in the world ever caused me greater pain, especially the wrong we have done to our allies, and to all Europe, as if we preferred a private interest to honesty and respect."

And then—

"Such is our lamentable situation; and, in the meantime, the minister in France is a good Prussian (d'Aiguillon). The humiliating advances which he has caused the king to make have rendered us more circumspect, and the King of Prussia more intractable. We can have no confidence in that man. We know for sure that England and the King of Prussia wish to win over the Du Barry. You ought to know better than I do if this be true. Louis XV. is constant in his friendship, and I dare appeal to his heart; but his weakness and his surroundings do not leave him time to reflect and follow his own bent. You perceive by this picture how necessary it is for the preservation of the alliance to use every effort to make it hold good in the present crisis. I shall never abandon the system adopted. I have given you convincing proofs of this; but if France flirts with Prussia, who will certainly deceive her, then, to my great regret, I shall be forced to change my mind. To hinder these misfortunes from falling on the monarchy and the family, you must employ every means, and there is only my daughter, the dauphiness, assisted by your counsels and knowledge of the 'locality,' who can render this service to her family and to her country. Above all, she must cultivate the good graces of the king by her assiduity and tenderness; she must endeavour to divine his thoughts; she must hurt his feelings in nothing; she must treat the favourite well. I do not insist upon *des bassesses*, still less upon intimacy, but merely upon attentions through consideration for her grandfather and master, and also the good which may result for us and the two Courts. The alliance may depend upon it. . . . I expect everything from your care and her tenderness, and believe me always to be, your very affectionate, &c. &c."

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

"VERSAILLES, 17th July.

" . . . I have seen Mercy, and after having read your dear letter, I talked over its contents with him. He showed me his

letter, which greatly touched me, and gave me food for reflection. I shall do my best to contribute to the preservation of the alliance. What would become of me should a rupture between the two families take place? I hope that God will spare me this misfortune, and will inspire me with what I ought to do. I have prayed to Him to do this with all my heart. . . .

"I shall certainly not forget what Mercy has said; it is very important, and I feel very anxious; but I should be only too happy to contribute to the union, and to prove to my dear mother my deference and respectful tenderness."

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

"COMPIÈGNE, 18th July.

" . . . I must return to the contents of the two gracious letters of your Majesty. When I handed to the dauphiness those addressed to her she was with the dauphin; however, she opened them, and read them at once. H. R. H. was about to sit down at table. She ordered me to wait until after supper, which did not last more than a quarter of an hour. She appeared to be very much preoccupied and pensive on returning to her study. She asked me what the special commission I had for her was. I replied by presenting her with the private letter of your Majesty. She read it with great attention, and seemed to be much struck by it. After a few moments' silence she said, 'What can I do to gain the heart of the king? They keep him away from us, and do not allow us to see him, and how can Madame du Barry have anything to do with the conduct to be observed?' I replied that it was impossible to disguise a painful truth, which was that this Du Barry was in a position to exercise a decisive influence upon the most serious matters, and I recapitulated a number of instances in proof of this. I pointed out to H. R. H. how flattering it was to her that your Majesty should have intrusted her with a mission so important and so precious as that of keeping up the union between the two Courts. I spoke of the position of a dauphiness, and how critical it was until she had given an heir to France. I entered at length into the means of captivating the monarch, and the necessity for keeping on good terms with the favourite and with ministers. . . . She assured me that she would do all that your Majesty desired; that, apart from any other motive, her love and respect for her august mother would determine her. . . ."

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

"1st August, 1772.

" . . . I have received your letter of the 18th July. I look upon all that is satisfactory in the conduct of my daughter as the result of your zeal. It is upon her that I count for the future, although I fear that in the end she will follow the example of the royal family of France, whose members know neither how to make themselves obeyed nor to give the *ton*, and who have contracted the habit of allowing themselves to be subjugated by their surroundings. . . ."

On the 14th August, Mercy gave the empress an account of another battle between the two future kings, Louis XVI. and Louis XVIII. The dauphiness was playing at cards with the Comte de Provence, when the dauphin amused himself with striking him on the arm with a wand. The Comte de Provence seized hold of it, and a struggle ensued, during which the dauphiness got possession of the wand and broke it in pieces. The dauphin received a lecture with his usual docility, and promised to give up practical jokes. Mercy added—"The dauphin has nothing against him, but he has been badly brought up; he displays several essential qualities; he is straightforward, he listens to the truth, and there is no need of beating about the bush with him. . . ."

"Although the 26th was Sunday, I found means to talk for a few moments with the archduchess. I warned her of the approaching visit of the Comtesse du Barry, and implored her to accord that woman a suitable reception, which would not give rise to any rumours. . . . The favourite having arrived after

the king's mass with the Duchess d'Aiguillon, the dauphiness first addressed the latter, and then turning towards the favourite she made some observations about the weather and hunting, so that without directly addressing the Comtesse du Barry, she was able to consider that the remarks of the dauphiness were addressed to her as well as to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon. It did not require any more to satisfy the favourite. The king, informed of what had passed, showed his satisfaction by his attentions to the dauphiness during dinner. . . .

“On the 5th August the king got a very slight kick from a horse. The dauphiness showed so much uneasiness and affection that his Majesty was quite enchanted. He got into the carriage of the archduchess and caressed her a thousand times. It so happened that they passed the spot where their first interview took place. The king said that he wished to celebrate the *souvenir* of so happy a day, and embraced the archduchess several times. I reminded H. R. H. of these little details, and endeavoured to show how easy it would be for her to captivate the king if she would only take the pains on different occasions.”

Some attempts were made at this time to lead the dauphin astray.

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“PARIS, 16th September.

“On the 13th the dauphin again resisted going to the private supper, which takes place every Thursday. I implored the dau-

phiness to persuade her husband not to object to anything which pleased the king. I even warned H. R. H. that the Comtesse du Barry would take the first opportunity of sitting next the dauphin at table, and that if that happened the young prince should try and assume an easy air, so as to avoid ill-natured remarks. . . .”

The dauphin went to the supper, but did not sit next to Madame du Barry.

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“FONTAINEBLEAU, 16th November, 1772.

“ Madame du Barry, having informed me of her intention to pay the archduchess a visit, asked me to arrange the best reception possible. . . . The Comtesse du Barry appeared satisfied with my language, and I reminded her of the idea she had at Compiègne of persuading the king to visit the archduchess instead of seeing her only in the apartments of *Mesdames*. The favourite assured me that she had several times spoken to the king on this subject; that the monarch had paid the archduchess several morning visits (I knew this), but that he could not pay her a daily visit and send for *Mesdames*, as that would pain them; that the dauphiness had made great progress with the king, and that she, the favourite, would sincerely co-operate in this. . . . The next day, feeling anxious on the subject, I went to see the dauphiness; she had just returned from mass. ‘I have prayed hard,’ she told me. I said—‘My God, if you wish me to speak, make me speak; I will act according as you inspire me.’ I replied that the voice of her august mother was the only one which could interpret the will of God as regarded her conduct, and that in this way she was inspired beforehand as to what was best to do. I had no time to say more, as H. R. H. had to go to the king. . . .”

The visit took place under the same conditions as at Compiègne, the dauphiness (probably not inspired by the Almighty) simply remarking to the Duchesse d’Aiguillon and Madame du Barry that the weather was bad, and that it would be impossible to go out. The dauphin was present, and Mercy attributed the

coldness of the dauphiness to that fact when trying to appease the offended favourite. He afterwards remonstrated with the archduchess, who promised to repair her fault upon the first opportunity, and who begged the ambassador to tone down his account of what had occurred when writing to the empress.

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

“VERSAILLES, 15th March, 1773.

“ . . . The marriage of the Comte d'Artois with the sister of the Comtesse de Provence will be announced publicly to-morrow. Since this marriage has been spoken of I have made a great many reflections. . . . I feel that the hurry to marry the Comte d'Artois has nothing very agreeable for my sister¹ or for myself. But it must be admitted that there are other reasons: it is hoped that a marriage between my sister² and the Prince of Piedmont will be arranged.”

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“PARIS, 17th March.

“ . . . The Duc d'Aiguillon has given a *fête* to the favourite, the object of which was to get the king to appear there, but he refused positively. . . . Having gone to Versailles the first Monday in Lent, I had a long conversation with the Comtesse du Barry,

¹ Sister-in-law, the Comtesse de Provence, who had no children.

² Sister-in-law, Madame Marie Clotilde, sister of the dauphin. This princess did marry the Prince of Piedmont two years later, and Bachaumont thus chronicled the event—

“3rd March, 1775.—It is well known how thick and voluminous is Madame Marie Adélaïde Clothilde, whose marriage with the Prince of Piedmont is announced; it is also known what excellent qualities of heart and mind are hidden under that rough envelope. . . . And on the 17th September, when she met her husband, she threw her arms round his neck, saying: ‘You find me very fat?’ ‘I find you charming,’ replied the prince, ‘you will make me happy.’”

and entered into several details concerning the dauphiness; I mentioned all the facts which could serve to prove that H. R. H. has no prejudice or ill-will against her person, and that the kindness of her character is not even susceptible of the least feeling of hatred. The favourite appeared to be perfectly tranquillized on this head, and threw all the blame on the surroundings of the archduchess and the counsels of *Mesdames*. . . . The Comtesse du Barry assured me that she would always be most attentive to do nothing to displease the dauphiness, and on my side I assured the favourite that she need have no uneasiness as to the manner of thinking or the intentions of the archduchess with regard to her. The arrival of the king put an end to our conversation. . . .”

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

“VERSAILLES, 18th April, 1773.

“ . . . I am enchanted that the queen (of Naples) is better. I hope she will have the good sense to give us a boy. If I had the happiness to follow her example, I am sure my dear mother would aid me with her good advice how to bring him up, and would have the consolation of seeing him married. Perhaps coming late they will be all the more healthy.”

Alas, the empress was dead and buried before her daughter gave birth to a son; nor was the unfortunate little prince destined to be married.

It was at last determined that the dauphin and the dauphiness should pay an official visit to Paris.

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

“VERSAILLES, 14th June, 1773.

“MADAME AND MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am quite ashamed of all your kindness. The day before yesterday Mercy handed me your precious letter, and yesterday I received the second. . . . On Tuesday we made our entry into Paris. As for honour, we received all that can be imagined; but that, though very agreeable, was not what touched me most. It was the affection and ardour of these poor people, who, in spite of the taxes with which they are overwhelmed, were transported with joy on seeing us. When we went

to walk in the Tuileries there was such a crowd that for three-quarters of an hour we could neither advance nor recede. The dauphin and I several times told the guards to strike no one, and that had a good effect. There was such good order observed during the day that, in spite of the enormous crowd which followed us everywhere, no one was hurt. On returning from our promenade we ascended a terrace, where we remained for half an hour. I cannot tell you, my dear mother, with what transports of joy and affection we were hailed at that moment. Before retiring we waved our hands to the people, which gave great pleasure. How happy we are in our position to be able to gain the friendship of a whole nation so cheaply ! There is nothing, however, so precious ; I felt this deeply, and shall never forget it.

“ Another point which afforded me great pleasure on this splendid day was the conduct of the dauphin. He replied in the most excellent terms to all the addresses, remarked everything that was done for him, and especially the joy and enthusiasm of the people, to whom he showed great kindness. . . . I feel every day more and more all that my dear mother has done to settle me. I was the youngest of all, and she treated me as if I were the eldest ; therefore my heart is full of the most tender gratitude.

“ The king has been good enough to release three hundred and twenty debtors, confined for not paying the nurses who suckled their children !¹ . . . My dear mother praises me too much for my tenderness and attachment to her ; never shall I be able to repay her half that I owe her. I embrace you with my whole heart.”

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“ COMPIÈGNE, 17th July.

“ Although there exists the most perfect harmony between the dauphin and the dauphiness, still H. R. H. has some trifling reasons to complain, concerning which she has been good enough to speak to me. All the ascendancy she exercises over the dauphin has not been able to turn aside that young prince from his extraordinary taste for all that appertains to building, such as masonry, carpentering, &c. He has always something new to arrange in his apartment. He works himself with the men engaged in removing such

¹ The money was due to the Municipality, which furnished the nurses, and was evidently not to be trifled with.

materials as beams and paving-stones, indulging in this hard exercise for hours together, coming back more fatigued than a common workman."

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

"2nd August, 1773.

"It is rather advantageous to us than contrary to our interests that the Duc d'Aiguillon should remain at his post, at least until the final arrangement of Polish affairs. Endowed with a limited amount of talent, without credit, unceasingly harassed by factions, he is not in a position to give us much trouble. Our work would be much more difficult if the Duc de Choiseul, no matter how well-intentioned he formerly was, should find himself again in office. It would be the same in the event of even Broglie replacing d'Aiguillon. . . ."

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

"SCHÖNBRUNN, 31st August.

I must admit frankly that I do not wish to see my daughter gain any decided influence in affairs. I have learned but too well myself by experience what an overwhelming burden is the government of a vast monarchy. What more is, I know the youth and frivolity of my daughter, joined to the little taste she has for application [and that she knows nothing], and this would make me fear for her success in governing a monarchy so unsettled as that of France at present; and if my daughter were unable to resuscitate it, I should like the blame to fall rather upon some minister than on my daughter [and that another paid for the fault]. I cannot therefore decide upon writing to her about politics and State affairs unless you deem it necessary, and point out what I should say.

"My daughter would no doubt do better to treat the favourite like any other woman to whom she is indifferent, and who comes to pay court, and I find this affectation never to address her strange; but as I have mentioned several times, either through caprice or nonchalance, she objects to making an effort to overcome a repugnance [she is even obstinate]."

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

"12th November.

"On the 27th October I had a very long and interesting conversation with Madame du Barry. It was at first the question of

State affairs and the matters referred to in my official despatch. Afterwards the favourite spoke to me about the dauphiness. I anticipated some new propositions, but she confined herself to asking me for my advice. The Comtesse du Barry, after having spoken in the most respectful terms of the dauphiness, and praised her highly, said that without having any particular cause for complaint, she saw that people always succeeded in obstructing all good relations with H. R. H. ; that she, Du Barry, had imagined that a letter from the king on this subject might make a favourable impression on the dauphiness. . . .”

Comte de Mercy persuaded the favourite to renounce this idea, employing all his diplomacy once more to soothe her irritation, and to persuade the dauphiness to be more reasonable.

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

“VIENNA, 3rd January, 1774.

“The coldness of the dauphin, a young husband of twenty years of age, towards a pretty wife is more than I can conceive. In spite of all the assertions of the faculty, my suspicions increase as to the physical constitution of the prince, and I have little to count upon but the good offices of the emperor, who, on his arrival at Versailles, will perhaps find means to persuade this indolent husband to acquit himself better of his duty.”

At the end of April, as we know, poor Louis XV. caught the small-pox, which soon showed itself in the most malignant form.

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“PARIS, 1st May, 1774.

“SACRED MAJESTY,—In the first moments, so grave and critical, the question arose whether the dauphiness ought to remain with the king or with the dauphin. There was much to be said in favour of both alternatives. I proposed that the dauphin should decide. As I write no decision has been arrived at. The dauphiness will no doubt write to your Majesty on the subject, but in the meantime it

will be proved that the archduchess offered to shut herself up with the king, and she will at least have the merit of this act.

“ I foresaw the case of the favourite, in the trance in which she finds herself, endeavouring to learn the intentions of the dauphin and the dauphiness; that is to say, whether she should remain at Court or take her departure. Supposing this demand to be made, I have advised the dauphiness not to answer. This circumspection appeared necessary, as in the event of the king confessing, it will be for the ecclesiastics to send away the favourite, and, if the monarch recovers from his illness, it might be dangerous if it could be imputed to the dauphin that he wished at such a moment to expel Madame du Barry. . . .”

Count de Mercy remembered what had happened after the “ Well-Beloved ” recovered from his fit of indigestion at Metz, and after it was found that the penknife of Damiens was not poisoned.

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“ PARIS, 8th May.

“ The dauphiness has ordered me to send the enclosed letter by despatch,¹ and as H. R. H. gives your Majesty an account of the present state of the king, the receiving of the sacrament, the language used by the Grand Almoner on this occasion, and the dismissal, or, more properly speaking, the concerted departure of the favourite, I shall confine myself to a few brief remarks. . . .

“ It appears certain that it was the king who himself asked for his confessor at 2.30 a.m. The princes, watch in hand, counted sixteen minutes that the confessor was alone with the king, who, after he had received the sacraments, sent for him three times.

“ After the confession the king sent for the Duc d’Aiguillon, and spoke to him in a whisper. It is said that he ordered him to send Madame du Barry further away; but during these last days it was clear that the king was more attached to the favourite than people imagined, and if the monarch recovers, it is to be presumed, and still more to be feared, that this woman will be recalled.

“ In this critical and delicate situation the dauphiness has behaved like an angel, and I cannot express all my admiration for her

¹ Letter lost.

piety, prudence, and good sense. The public are enchanted, and with good reason. . . .”

“Should the king lose his life, it would be most useful for your Majesty to write to the dauphiness to listen to me on the subject of all that concerns the union and system of the two courts. . . . For the security of her own happiness, she must commence to assume that authority which the dauphin will never exercise except in a precarious manner, and looking at the sort of people who compose this Court, the spirit which animates and guides them, it would be most dangerous for the State and for the system in general should any one monopolize the dauphin, and if he were influenced by any one but the dauphiness.

“ . . . I have just received news from Versailles. The king passed a good night, but at five a.m. he began to rave. . . . His life is in imminent danger.”

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“VERSAILLES, 10th May, 5 P.M.

“The king expired this afternoon after having received extreme unction. He never lost his mind, and up to the last showed signs of a truly Christian penitence and piety. Everything here is in great confusion. The royal family are going to Choisy. I have taken the orders of the queen (Marie Antoinette), who is in good health; but her emotion and the impossibility of quitting her husband prevent her from writing for the moment. . . .”

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

“CHOISY, 14th May.

“Mercy has given you a description of our misfortune. . . . The new king appears to possess the heart of his people. Two days after the death of grandfather he had 200,000 francs distributed to the poor, and this produced a great effect. Since the death of the late king he has not ceased to work, and to answer ministers with his own hand. What is sure is, that he has a taste for economy, and a great desire to render his people happy. He has as much wish as need to gain information. I hope that God will bless his good intentions.

“The public expected a great many changes at this moment. The king confined himself to sending the creature to a convent, and

driving from Court all who bear that name of scandal. The king owed this example to the people of Versailles, who, at the very moment of the 'accident,' hooted Madame de Mazarin, one of the most humble servants of the favourite. I have been exhorted to preach clemency to the king in favour of a number of 'corrupted souls' who have done a great deal of evil for many years past. I feel inclined to consent. . . .

"I have just received a message forbidding me to visit my aunt, Madame Adélaïde; it is feared that she has caught the small-pox. I shudder, and do not dare to think of the consequences. It is very fearful to reflect that she should pay so quickly for the sacrifice she made.¹ . . ."

The king added in his own hand—

"I am very glad to find an opportunity, my dear mother, of showing you my tenderness and affection. I should much like to have your advice at the present moment. I shall be enchanted to be agreeable to you, and to prove my attachment and the gratitude I owe you for having kindly consented to give me your daughter, with whom I could not be better satisfied."

In a letter of the 17th May, Mercy thus wrote to the empress—

"The king, who has several solid qualities, has few amiable ones. His exterior is ungainly, and business will no doubt ruffle his temper. The queen must learn to support this. Her happiness will depend upon it. She is loved by her husband. With moderation and caresses she will acquire absolute power over the king; but she must govern without allowing it to be perceived that she wishes to govern. A matter of the greatest importance is that the queen should take measures always to share the couch of the king. I think it indispensable that your Majesty should deign to mention this in your letters. . . ."

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

"18th May.

"Yesterday evening your courier arrived with the news of the cruel loss of our king and friend. I am much afflicted by it, and

¹ That of nursing her father.

still more preoccupied with the fate of my daughter, who can only be wholly great or very unhappy. The situation of the king, of ministers, and of the State itself is not calculated to calm my uneasiness. She herself has never been able to apply herself, and will have difficulty in doing so. I look upon her happy days as over; they have come to an end sooner than mine did.

"I thought it right, in my letter to my daughter, to say something about the poor Du Barry. She wrote to me on the 7th with vehemence, calling her creature. That unfortunate woman is more to be pitied than any of us; she has lost everything, and has no consolation nor resource in religion, which on such occasions is the only efficacious remedy. . . ."

MARIA THERESA TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

LAXENBURG, 18th May.

" . . . I shall all my life regret that prince and friend, your good and tender-hearted father-in-law. I admire at the same time the bounty of God in having given the king time to have recourse to divine pity, and the words of the Grand Almoner, pronounced on the part of the king, cannot be read without tears. . . . I shall wear mourning for the rest of my days. I do not compliment you on your dignity, which is dearly purchased."

And after some sound advice the empress added—

"You are both very young; the burden is great. I am very anxious, really anxious. Unless your adorable father, under similar circumstances, had sustained me, I never should have been able to get on, and I was older than both of you."

Then followed advice to change nothing in a hurry, and to listen to Mercy, and in a P.S.—

"I hope there will be no further question of the unfortunate Du Barry, with whom I was drawn into contact, merely by the respect due to your grandfather and sovereign. I hope to hear no more of her after learning that the king has treated her with generosity, 'confining' her with her husband far from the Court, softening her lot, as far as suitable and as humanity exacts."

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

SCHÖNBRUNN, 26th May.

“ . . . You cannot imagine how much I am preoccupied by the consequences of the death of the king. What increases my trouble is that Kaunitz has not come near me since the news arrived, for fear of hearing me speak about it. The very mention of small-pox fills him with terror; for two days after the courier brought the fatal news no one dared to announce it to him. . . . I should have liked the proceedings against the Du Barry to have been conducted with less noise and less rigour. . . .

“It is said that before his death the late dauphin confided some secret instructions to M. de Maurepas, with orders to hand them to his son, the present king, when he ascended the throne. You will be able better than myself to judge of the value of this report; but, taking everything into account, I regret more than ever the death of the king, my good friend and ally, upon whose firmness I could count; I have little confidence as yet in the system which is about to be established in France. I shall therefore be very glad to have an exact account of the manner in which the king died. Some persons pretend that when he made his confession, which was terminated in sixteen minutes, and that when he ordered his almoner to make the well-known declaration [the terms of which he was ignorant of], his head was not clear. I should also like to know if, as is supposed, 40,000,000 livres or florins were found in his cash-box. . . . Rohan¹ keeps up the report which was spread last year, and which has just been revived, that Choiseul poisoned the late dauphin and his wife; he even adds that he learned this from the doctor Tronchin. . . .”

On the 30th of May the empress wrote to her daughter a letter, in which she described all her anxiety.

“It was said that the king (Louis XVI.) had small-pox, and that Mesdames Adélaïde and Sophie had been attacked by the same disease, which would have been only natural, as they nursed the king (Louis XV.); but it would be terrible were the present king

¹ The cardinal.

attacked. God preserve us. He is the consolation and hope of his people, of his allies, and his family. I can hardly express how affected I was by the few lines which the king wrote at the end of your letter. I prefer this sort of cordiality to anything else; and that kind attention to tell me that he is satisfied with my dear daughter, and that he thought of me in the first moments of his painful situation, moved me to tears."

After some advice as to the kind of ministers to select, the empress added—

"We are fortunately at peace, and there is no hurry; France has immense resources. There are enormous abuses, and the king by abolishing them will draw down on himself the blessing of his people. The perspective is sublime; it is only necessary not to precipitate matters, and to choose good ministers. . . . I flatter myself that I shall see the reign of Louis Auguste happy and glorious. . . ."

On the 7th June, Mercy wrote to the empress denying the report that Louis XV. was wandering when the Grand Almoner pronounced the *amende honorable*; declaring that the amount of money found in his cash-box had been greatly exaggerated; and that the public in general were indignant at the atrocious calumny circulated with regard to the Duc de Choiseul, it being well known that from the time the dauphin had the small-pox he had never enjoyed a day's health.

In replying to Mercy on the 16th June the empress wrote—

"What you say about the pretended poisoning of the late dauphin and his wife corresponds with the idea which I had formed. I am of the same way of thinking with regard to a report which finds many partisans here, that one of *Mesdames* had a child [and even

several]. What think you, and which is the guilty one? If this report be true, I shall weep over human frailty; but if the contrary, I shall be glad to reduce the shameless calumniators to silence."

On the 28th June, the Count de Mercy denied that there was the slightest foundation for the above-mentioned and other "horrible anecdotes, in which the names of Madame Adélaïde, of her brother, of the Bishop of Senlis, of Madame Victoire, and of Louis XV. were mixed up." He added that such "audacious and atrocious calumnies" were so common in France that little notice was taken of them.

MARIA THERESA TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

"SCHÖNBRUNN, 16th June.

"I know not how to express all my consolation and joy respecting what I hear about you; all the universe is in ecstasies. There is good reason for this: a king of twenty and a queen of nineteen; and all their actions overflowing with humanity, generosity, prudence, and sound judgment. Religion and morality, so necessary to draw down the blessing of God and to restrain the people, are not forgotten. My heart is filled with joy, and I pray that God may preserve you for the welfare of your people, the universe, your family and your old mother, whom you cause to live again. . . . How pleasant it is to render the people happy! How I love the French at this moment! What resources in a nation which feels so intensely! . . ."

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

"MARLY, 30th July.

"Your two last letters have overwhelmed me with satisfaction, seeing the kindness with which my dear mother thinks of all that interests me. It is quite true that the praises of the king have re-echoed everywhere. He deserves this for the uprightness of his mind and his desire to do well; but this French enthusiasm renders me uneasy for the future. The little I understand about affairs enables me to foresee great difficulties. It is admitted that the late

king has left matters in a very unsatisfactory condition. . . . I hope that the king will not have the same weakness as his grandfather ; also that he will not have a favourite ; but I fear that he will be too gentle and too easily led. . . .

“I must admit my ‘dissipation’ and idleness as far as serious matters are concerned. I wish and hope to correct myself by degrees, and, without ever mixing myself up in intrigues, to make myself worthy of the confidence of the king, who continues to live with me in the most friendly way.”

The empress had soon reason to change her mind with regard to the French, in whose enthusiasm Marie Antoinette had so little confidence. The following indignant letter was called forth by a libel, published by the secret enemies of the queen, and which Beaumarchais had been sent to London to buy up and destroy. The libel was purchased from the Jew Angelucci, who instead of destroying the whole edition, as agreed upon, kept one copy. To recover this copy, Beaumarchais, according to his own account, pursued the Hebrew to Germany, fell among robbers in a forest, was wounded, and finally reached Vienna, where he obtained an audience from the empress, but was afterwards thrown into prison, where he remained for a month, Prince Kaunitz suspecting him of having written the libel himself.

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

“28th August.

“You will see by this courier what has just happened. I must say that I never thought that the inveterate hatred against the Austrians, against my person, and against the poor innocent queen, was so deeply rooted in the hearts of the French. This then is the end of all the adulation lavished on my daughter ! This is the love

they bear her! Never did anything so atrocious appear; never did anything inspire my heart with such utter contempt for that nation without religion, morality, or good feeling. . . .”

And in a long letter, all in her own hand, did the empress continue to “pour out her bile,” as she herself expressed it. Count de Mercy in reply endeavoured to exculpate the French nation in general. He protested that the atrocities which infected France were the work of a small section, forming the scum of the people, and could have no influence on the position of the queen. He declared on “the peril of his life” that there was not the shadow of a foundation for the reports spread against her Majesty, whose whole conduct bore the impress of the most rigid virtue. “The great and rare qualities of the queen,” he added, “are well known to the public; she is adored with unfailing enthusiasm, a very striking proof of which has just been given.” When the people, to show their hatred for the Chancellor Maupeou, burned him in effigy, they cried—“Let us avenge our charming queen, against whom this wretch has dared to speak ill, and to write libels.” The incriminated pamphlet asserted among other things that the king was impotent. This greatly irritated the empress, who said that she hoped the accusation would touch his honour. Writing again on the 13th of October the empress said—[There is a rumour here that the king has undergone an operation, from which great things are expected; as you do not mention the matter, I hardly believe it]—

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

"17th December.

"I was glad to have given you a few moments' satisfaction, but you will not have so much pleasure in learning that the Comtesse d'Artois is *enceinte*. . . . I acknowledge, my dear mamma, that I am sorry that she will become a mother before myself; but I nevertheless consider it right to pay more attention to her than any one else. A week ago the king had a long conversation with my doctor; I am very well satisfied with his 'dispositions,' and I have good hope of soon following the example of my sister. . . ."

According to Mercy the interesting position in which the Comtesse d'Artois found herself made a most painful impression upon Marie Antoinette, who begged the ambassador not to mention to the empress how deeply she felt on the subject.

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

"VERSAILLES, 12th August.

"The Comtesse d'Artois was safely confined on the 6th without much suffering. I was in her room all the time. It is useless to say how grieved I was to see an heir, which is not mine. I did not, however, fail in any attention to mother or child.¹ . . ."

In 1775, Marie Antoinette, in spite of her mother and Mercy Argenteau, had the Duc d'Aiguillon driven from office. The queen had much to complain of, and gravely suspected the minister of having her lampooned. Then he had recently taken part against the Comte de Guines, accused of having sadly abused his position when ambassador in England. Her

¹ This child was the Duc d'Angoulême, who became dauphin on the death of Louis XVIII., but who did not reign.

Majesty wrote triumphantly, on the 15th July, to Count Rosenberg—"The departure of Monsieur d'Aiguillon is entirely my work. The cup was filled to overflowing; that horrid man employed spies, and held bad language. He sought to brave me more than once in the affair of M. de Guines. As soon as the verdict was pronounced,¹ I asked the king to dismiss him. It is true that I did not wish to employ a *lettre de cachet*; but he has lost nothing by that, for instead of remaining in Touraine, as he wished, he was begged to continue his journey as far as Aiguillon, which is in Gascony."

Maria Theresa evidently feared that on the fall of the Duc d'Aiguillon the Duc de Choiseul would return to office. Secretary Pichler wrote thus upon this subject to Mercy—"In spite of her Majesty's kind wishes towards the Duc de Choiseul, she cannot approve of the deep interest which the queen takes in his favour. The empress is persuaded that, in the present position of affairs, a minister of the character of the Duc de Choiseul would not suit us, being convinced that neither the affairs of Poland nor those of the Porte would have passed over quietly if the Duc de Choiseul had been at the head of affairs. Still less does her Majesty approve of the spirit of revenge which the queen showed towards the Duc d'Aiguillon, and the steps taken to render her hostile to the present ministry"—to wit, Maurepas,

¹ The Duc de Guines was tried and acquitted of the charges brought against him.

Vergennes, Turgot, the Comte de St. Germain, Sartine, Malesherbes.

All the efforts made by Marie Antoinette to persuade Louis XV. to restore Choiseul to favour, and to employ him in the service of the country, were fruitless. His Majesty had long since allowed himself to be convinced by the clerical party that the duke had poisoned his father. All that the queen could do was to obtain permission for Choiseul to appear at Versailles and to make his bow, and this favour she obtained by craft. She thus related the affair herself—"You cannot imagine all the tact I employed so as not to have the appearance of demanding a permission. I told the king that I wished to see M. de Choiseul, but that I was embarrassed as to the day. I managed matters so well that the *poor man* himself settled the hour the most convenient for seeing him. I think that I made a good use of my rights as a wife on that occasion. . . . So much has been said about this audience, that I should not be astonished to learn that old Maurepas was afraid to go home to bed." The letter in which Marie Antoinette spoke thus disrespectfully of her royal spouse was addressed to the Count Rosenberg,¹ who unfortunately showed it to the empress. Maria Theresa was highly incensed, nor was her wrath to be appeased by the explanations of her ambassador, who said that—"The whole sense and tone of the latter are due to the pardonable vanity of wishing to appear in a position to

¹ 17th July, 1775.

govern the king, and that in making use of the term she employed, the queen had no idea of treating his Majesty with any want of respect." Mercy Argenteau, too, said that Marie Antoinette had used the word *bon* and not *pauvre*. This did not prevent the empress from writing to her ambassador on the 31st July, saying—"It is not with the epithet *bon*, but with *pauvre homme* that she 'regaled' her spouse. . . . What a style! What a manner of thinking! This but too well confirms my uneasiness; she is hastening to her ruin, and will be only too happy if able to preserve the virtues of her rank. Should Choiseul enter the ministry she will be lost. He will treat her as he did Pompadour, to whom he owed everything, and whose ruin he sought."

MARIA THERESA TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

"SCHÖNBRUNN, 31st August.

"The safe delivery of your sister-in-law has touched my heart as well as yours. However, it is preferable that the succession should remain in the same family. It is long since I heard anything upon this important subject. It appears to me that you do not take it sufficiently to heart. . . ."

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

"PARIS, 12th November.

" The king appears to redouble his friendship and his confidence, and on that side I have nothing to wish for. As regards the important object, which renders the tenderness of my dear mother so uneasy, I regret to say that I have nothing new to tell her; the *nonchalance* is certainly not on my side. I feel more than ever how interesting this 'article' is for my welfare; but my dear mother can understand how embarrassing my situation is, and that I have no other means to employ but patience and docility."

At the end of 1775 Mercy had to report to the empress that the Comtesse d'Artois was *enceinte* again—

“I am in the greatest anxiety,” he wrote on the 17th December, “as to the effect which this will produce in the long run on the mind of the queen. No matter how brilliant her position may be at this moment, it lacks that solid consistency which it will not acquire until this august princess gives an heir to the State. . . . The influence and power of the queen at times disturb this petulant and frivolous nation, which fears to be governed by a princess who lacks the quality of mother to be French. This remark is of great importance. I constantly lay it before the queen, showing her how necessary it is to employ her influence with prudence and moderation.”

After many hopes and fears vaguely expressed, we at last come to the following letter—

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“PARIS, 16th May, 1776.

“ The queen from time to time goes to pay the king a visit in the morning ; but this only occurs when she wishes to force him to take resolutions which are repugnant to him. This is a subject upon which I have made the strongest representations. I have reason to believe that the queen finds herself in a position to become *enceinte*, but she alone can and ought to say more on this important subject to your Majesty. . . .”¹

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“PARIS, 16th May.

“SACRED MAJESTY,—I cannot and ought not to conceal from your Majesty that for some weeks past matters have taken a turn as contrary to the real welfare of the queen as distressing to me. Your Majesty will condescend to observe the effects of the influence of the queen, which may one day draw down upon her the just reproaches of the king her husband, and even those of the entire

¹ This was a false alarm.

nation. . . . The Controulér-General, aware of the hatred of the queen, has determined to resign office ; the intention of the queen was to insist on Turgot being dismissed, and even sent to the Bastille, on the same day that the Comte de Guines was made a duke. It required the strongest remonstrances to stay the anger of her Majesty, who had no cause of complaint against Turgot beyond the steps taken by that minister to obtain the recall of the Comte de Guines. This same Controulér-General, enjoying a great reputation for honesty, and being liked by the people, it is a great pity that his resignation should be in a measure the work of the queen. Her Majesty equally wishes the Comte de Vergennes to be dismissed on account of the Duc de Guines. Your Majesty will no doubt be surprised that the Comte de Guines, for whom the queen has no personal affection, should be the cause of such great changes ; the reason is to be found in the *entourage* of her Majesty, which is devoted to the Court."

Turgot resigned, and was followed by Malesherbes, and thus disappeared two honest ministers, who might have saved France from the horrors of the Revolution. They were sacrificed in a measure, as the Count Mercy remarks, to the Comte de Guines, or a faction fight between the friends of the Duc de Choiseul, who sided with the Count, and those of the Duc d'Aiguillon, who opposed him. It must be remembered, however, that Turgot had against him all the great officers of the State, all the financiers, all the Parliaments, all the ladies of the Court, and the whole clerical party. Marie Antoinette cannot therefore be held alone responsible for the resignation of the two ministers. Writing to her mother on the 15th May, she pretended that she had had nothing to do with the matter. "M. de Malesherbes," she wrote, "quitted the ministry the day before yesterday, and was at once replaced by M. Amelot. M. Turgot was dismissed the

same day, and M. de Clugny will replace him. I acknowledge, my dear mother, that I am not sorry for these departures, but I had nothing to do with them."

Maria Theresa had warned her daughter against the danger of precipitate action, and this was the fault into which Turgot fell. He wished to rattle the old State car along at a pace which it could not support.

On the 16th April, Mercy wrote a long despatch to the empress, in which he said that "there exist some wretches who propose to lead the king astray; I further know that they have dared to speak to him of an actress of the French theatre called Contat. These horrible attempts have produced no effect, and I am morally sure that they will never produce any; however, the queen must be on her guard, and I have not left her in ignorance of what I expose here. . . ."

Two days later the ambassador expressed his surprise that the queen should have been received with great applause at the Opera, the French Theatre, and the Italian Theatre, as the public had been lately complaining of the inordinate passion for play exhibited by her Majesty—a passion which led to consequences of the most serious character. . . .

The Emperor Joseph, who had long contemplated a visit to France, arrived on the 18th April;¹ and from

¹ "19th April.—The queen passed through Paris yesterday with fourteen carriages, all going to the forest of Bondi, as if to hunt; this was merely a pretext; the real object was to meet the emperor. The *cortége* passed along the Boulevards at noon, during a fearful shower of rain, which, as the carriages were open, played havoc

what Mercy wrote to Maria Theresa, it is easy to see that the queen rather dreaded the visit of her brother, and feared his displeasure. On the 7th May, the ambassador informed his imperial mistress that the presence of the emperor had had a most beneficial effect, and that he had behaved towards his august sister in a manner which had both reassured her and won her confidence. Mercy was in great hopes that the emperor would be able to persuade the queen to give up gambling, and to live on more intimate terms with the king. He said—"It is not yet possible to say what effect the presence of the emperor has produced on the king. It is, however, beyond doubt that the advice of the emperor and his good example will develop in the mind of the king ideas destined to bear fruit." The most essential point appears to be that the queen has been persuaded by the emperor to live on more intimate terms with the king, to inspire his affection and confidence, and to be with him as much as possible.

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

"VERSAILLES, 14th June.

"It is true that the departure of the emperor has left a void which cannot be filled up. I was so happy during his short stay that his visit now appears like a dream. But what is not a dream is the good advice which he has given me, which is engraved in my heart. He has given me a thing which I asked for; that is to say, he has left me his counsels in writing. They form my principal reading to-day, and if ever (which I doubt) I were to forget what he said, I have this paper always before me to remind me of my duty. . . ."

with the ladies' bonnets, *à la Henri IV.*, and spoiled their feathers. The queen appeared to be greatly amused. . . ."—*Bachaumont*.

Mercy during the stay of the Emperor Joseph kept a journal, which he forwarded to Maria Theresa. From this we find that the meeting between Marie Antoinette and her brother was of the most affecting character, and that the queen was much flattered by two compliments paid by the emperor; the first being—"If you were not my sister I should like to marry you, in order to have so charming a companion;" the second—"Should you be left a widow without children, you must come and live with the empress and myself."

"These two *propos* determined Marie Antoinette to open her mind to the emperor," wrote Mercy, "and to speak to him without disguise on the most essential points of her position. She first mentioned the facts relative to matrimonial intimacy, and your Majesty will learn from the emperor that this matter has been cleared up as far as possible, even in a satisfactory manner. The queen afterwards spoke about her taste for gambling, for pleasure, for society, and her favourites. . . . The emperor acquitted himself with great circumspection and gentleness, which rendered the queen more confiding and tranquil. . . ."

The meeting between the emperor and the king seems to have been very cordial.

"On the 21st," says Mercy, "the emperor went to Versailles, passed a few moments with the queen, paid visits to several ladies, and returned to dine with the king and the queen. . . . The conversation turned upon a variety of objects, and even upon affairs

of State. The emperor found that the king was not entirely devoid of knowledge, that he appeared to cling to his ideas rather through obstinacy than conviction, and that he seemed inclined to do what was right. . . . The supper was more than gay, that is to say, on the part of the king and the two princes his brothers. They behaved in so free-and-easy a way that on rising from table they amused themselves like children, running round the room, throwing each other down on the sofas, to such a point that the queen and the princesses felt greatly embarrassed, owing to the presence of the emperor. *Madame* (the Comtesse de Provence) showed impatience, and calling her husband, said that she had never seen him play the child like that before.

“On the 22nd the queen took her august brother to the Trianon, where they dined, and after dinner strolled through the gardens together. The emperor, referring to the topics concerning which the queen had spoken to him, drew a striking picture of the position, the rocks by which she was surrounded, and pointed out the infallible and fearful consequences of her conduct as regards the future. He touched upon her neglect of the king, the company she kept, the abandonment of every serious occupation, and her passion for play. Such was the tone of interest adopted by the emperor, and so moderate the language in which his remonstrances were conveyed, that the queen was in no way offended. . . . The emperor was greatly displeased with the *Princesse de*

Lamballe; the queen admitted that, by infatuation, she had been deceived with regard to that favourite, and that she regretted having given her the post she occupied. . . .

“On the 27th the emperor accorded me an audience, when I entered in detail into the following points—1st, The causes of the ascendancy of the queen over her husband. I showed him that the king was proud of the charms and qualities of the queen, that he loved her as much as he is capable of loving, but that he feared as much as he loved her. Of this I cited several proofs. 2nd, I analyzed the true feelings of the queen for the king. I observed that she neglected him too much and intimidated him too often. 3rd, I proved that the princes of the House of Bourbon are governed by habit. 4th, I spoke of the danger of the queen constantly demanding trifles. . . .”

Mercy also spoke to the emperor of the debts of her Majesty, her love of diamonds, and the persons who surrounded her, especially the Princesse de Guéménée. . . . “Yielding to the wishes of the queen,” he added, “the emperor accompanied her to the Princesse de Guéménée’s, and was shocked at the style of the persons and the air of license which reigned there. The emperor witnessed a game of pharaon, and heard the princess, in the presence of the queen, reproached for her suspicious manner of playing. The emperor was indignant, and told the queen that the house was a regular hell (*tripot*). The queen endeavoured to make excuses, and returned to

the table after midnight, on the plea that she had promised to do so. The emperor was greatly mortified by this discouraging obstinacy. . . .

“The king came in, and for the first time the queen left him alone with the emperor. The king naturally dwelt upon his position as a married man, and said that he hoped soon to have children. The emperor did not ask him any questions upon this subject, the queen having fully explained everything. . . . The emperor is very well satisfied with the king, but such is not the case with *Monsieur* (the Comte de Provence). *Madame* also is not to the taste of his Majesty, who is, however, better pleased with the frankness of the Comte d’Artois.”¹

On the 4th the emperor told Mercy that the evening before he had had a very stormy interview with the queen, having spoken very strongly against her associating with the Princesse de Guéménée, and represented the danger of such an amusement as gambling. Ten days later Mercy related how the emperor met and conversed with “that creature,” Madame du Barry.

“On the 14th the emperor passed the night at Versailles, and the next day visited the stables, the hydraulic machine at Marly and Louveciennes. The Comtesse du Barry, left in possession of that place,

¹ In a letter to his brother Leopold, the emperor said—“*Monsieur* is an indefinable being; he is even colder than the king. *Madame*, ugly and vulgar, is not a Piedmontese for nothing. . . .” And of the Comte d’Artois he wrote—“He is a *petit maître* in everything. His wife, who alone has children, is a perfect idiot.”

was there at the time; the emperor met her in the garden, and had a few minutes' conversation with her. His Majesty found the said countess much as I had depicted her. On his return to Versailles, the emperor had a private conversation with the king, who confided further matters to him on the subject of his marriage state; but it belongs to the emperor to give your Majesty an account of what passed."

On the 16th June Marie Antoinette, in a letter to her mother, said that the departure of the emperor was a cruel shock to her. After stating how popular he had made himself, her Majesty added—"It is believed that the Comtesse d'Artois is *enceinte* again. This is a sufficiently disagreeable sight for me after seven years of marriage; but it would be unjust to display ill-humour. I am not without hope; my brother will tell my dear mother how matters stand. The king spoke to him on this subject with sincerity and confidence."

The strong representations of the emperor exercised but a slight influence on the queen. A few days after he left Paris Mercy reported that the Princesse de Guéménée was highly offended because the queen had dropped her. But her Majesty had not given up gambling. On the 15th July Mercy reported that the Duc de Fronsac and the Marquis d'Ossun had held a bank; that her Majesty had won 500 louis; that the Comte d'Artois had lost 1700, the Comtesse de Provence 400, and the Comtesse d'Artois 250. "This high play," he added, "goes on augmenting, and it is

certain that the king has some difficulty in tolerating it, though he says nothing to the queen." At the same time Mercy was able to inform the empress that her Majesty spent an hour every day in the study of English history.

The adherents of the Duc de Choiseul were in great hopes that Joseph II. would have paid a visit to Chanteloup, where the fallen statesman resided, on his way through Touraine, but in this they were disappointed. Maria Theresa referred to this matter—

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

"31st July.

" . . . I will not attempt to disguise the fact that I should have liked the emperor to have gone to Chanteloup, if only for one or two hours in passing, without dining or sleeping there. As the visit to Chanteloup was publicly announced, Choiseul will feel greatly mortified. Yet he is not a man to drive to extremities, seeing that he may sooner or later return to office. I believe him to be of a revengeful disposition. I should have been [more] content if the emperor had dispensed with going to see that contemptible Du Barry, and I rejoice with my whole heart that in passing by Geneva he avoided meeting that wretched Voltaire." (Not only a philosopher, but the friend of the King of Prussia, the arch-enemy of her House.)

"As for the commerce in the Black Sea, I doubt if we shall ever be able to vie with the French, the English, or even the Russians. But the partition of the Turkish Empire would be the most hazardous and dangerous of enterprises, owing to the consequences to be feared. What should we gain by pushing our conquests even to the gates of Constantinople? Some unhealthy, uncultivated provinces, uninhabited, or inhabited only by perfidious and evil-minded Greeks, who would exhaust rather than augment the strength of the empire. Then my House would for ever lose that reputation for good faith of which it is so jealous. It would be a more critical event than the partition of Poland [which still weighs on my heart], more advantageous to my redoubtable neighbours than to my House. I never cease to regret having been drawn into that

affair, and unless owing to some fatal and inevitable combination of unfortunate circumstances, I will never lend myself to the partition of Turkey [and I hope that even our nephews will not see them out of Europe].”

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“PARIS, 12th September.

“ . . . After what the queen has deigned to tell me, she has taken the opportunity of the departure of the French courier to write to your Majesty on the subject of some interesting facts relative to her married state. The secrecy insisted upon by the king deprived me for ten days of all knowledge of this affair, concerning which your Majesty can be well informed by the queen alone. Besides, this event, which is now proved and certain, will give a new character to the position of the queen, which promises great things. . . .

“The passion for play with which the queen is more than ever animated has given rise to much that is disagreeable. The gambling parties have become at times tumultuous and indecent; they have occasioned, on the part of those who acted as bankers, complaints against several ladies of the Court with regard to their manner of playing. One evening a very lively scene took place between the Duc de Fronsac and the Duchesse de Gramont. These scandals, which cannot be concealed, have been much talked about. The queen has felt very much embarrassed, and returns from time to time to the Princesse de Guéménée. The losses of the queen at play augment; her finances are entirely exhausted; debts are left unpaid, and there are no funds for acts of charity.”

Mercy then informed the empress that her Majesty was “well advanced in the history of England by the *Sieur Hume*,” and that he was much pleased with her observations on the most remarkable features of that history.

In another letter of the same date as the above, Mercy wrote that he had endeavoured to impress upon the queen that, seeing there was a chance of becoming

a mother, she owed to religion and glory to renounce frivolity, and to act in a manner consistent with her altered position. Mercy added—"In justice to the queen, I must mention that she not only agreed with what I said, but reminded me that she herself had entered into an engagement with me to become reasonable directly she found herself in an interesting position. It appears indispensable to take beforehand all the precautions which the future state of the queen may necessitate. The first of all these precautions is that of giving up riding, of driving too fast, so as to avoid violent shaking, and of exposing herself to see men tumble off their horses, and other accidents only too common here at the pace the Court travels.

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

"SCHÖNBRUNN, 1st October.

"The change in the situation of my daughter is an event which greatly interests me; but it is the effect alone that will entirely reassure me." After saying that she saw no reason why the queen should give up riding and driving, the empress went on to say—"But should my daughter become *enceinte*, I must admit that I tremble for both mother and child, before and after confinement. The most atrocious crimes cost little in a country where irreligion is carried to the last excess. Add to this the Piedmontese intrigue, which gains ground more and more in France.¹ I should like greatly, in the event of the queen becoming *enceinte*, to be able to place a trustworthy person beside her [and especially beside the child]; but as I see no possibility of this, we must leave it to Providence to tranquillize us with respect to the sad examples which French history has furnished of horrors of this kind."

¹ Alluding to the Comte d'Artois and his Piedmontese wife, whose son was looked upon as heir-presumptive to the throne.

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“FONTAINEBLEAU, 17th October.

“ . . . According to the customs of this country, no person of quality can keep a bank of faro. The Duc de Fronsac and the Marquis d'Ossun, to please the queen, determined to keep one. Some indecent disputes caused them to retire. The Comte de Merle replaced them, but as he was not rich enough to expose himself to losses which might ruin him in a night, he had to procure partners. The queen intervened in order to facilitate matters. Her Majesty is sometimes interested in the bank against which she plays. The Comte d'Artois acts in a similar manner, and by dint of these expedients high play is kept up. All this causes great uneasiness to the families of persons about the Court, and the scandal makes the people of Paris murmur. What is worse still is, that there is a great mixture at Court, and that persons, by means of play, gain access to her Majesty, and manage to extract all kinds of favours from her. Within the last two months her Majesty has insisted on having the disposal of a number of appointments, especially from the Ministers of War and Finance. Her Majesty tries to conceal the fact, but she loses almost daily.”¹

¹ With respect to this Court gambling Bachaumont says—

“7th December, 1777.—There is a great deal of talk about a certain Smith (Englishman), who came here during the trip to Fontainebleau with 200,000 louis to lose at play (?). This whetted the cupidity of the Court gamblers; and, though he is of very low extraction, the rank of colonel, which he obtained in India, was made an excuse for presenting him to the queen and the royal family. He was in consequence admitted to play at her Majesty's table, has become familiar with our princes, whom he ruins, as well as a number of nobles. It is said that he has won 1,500,000 francs. He has all the insolence which prosperity gives. He was seen the other day at table with the Comte d'Artois and the Duc de Chartres, leaning with his elbows on the table in the most free-and-easy manner.”

If we are to believe Bachaumont, matters did not improve, for a year later he wrote—

“24th November, 1778.—The bankers at the queen's table, in order

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

"PARIS, 19th November.

"My very humble and ostensible report contains some matters which require explanation. I beg to observe, that my representations as to the necessity of being as much as possible with the king, of amusing and interesting him, have not produced the desired effect on the queen, because she has formed too poor an idea of the character and moral faculties of her husband. She believes him too apathetic and too timid to indulge in gallantries. The queen is so persuaded of this, that she has told some of the persons by whom she is surrounded, that she would not be sorry to see the king take a momentary and fleeting inclination, as this would give him more manliness and energy. I represented to the queen most strongly that she should not trifle on this subject, and that it was even exceedingly dangerous to speak of it with so much indifference. . . . I managed to persuade the queen of the truth of this, but she nevertheless persists in her opinion as to the weakness of the king's character, which she makes out to be much weaker than it really is. Her Majesty thinks that, having gained a decided ascendancy over the king, she will always be able to master him, and that she has nothing more to desire in this respect; that the king being little sensible to attentions, it would be waste of time to employ them; and that, being able to govern by fear, this method is as sure, shorter, and more convenient."

Mercy did not approve of these ideas, and pointed out to her Majesty that a thorough knowledge of affairs, which she did not possess, could alone give a solid and durable authority. The count went on to

to prevent being cheated by ladies of the Court, have obtained permission from her Majesty to have a ribbon round the table, and that no money shall be considered as staked not placed on a card outside the ribbon. This precaution will prevent some swindling, but not that from which credulous 'punters' suffer who confide their money to duchesses, many of whom deny having received the money when their card wins."

complain that—"With regard to the dangerous passion for play, the queen will listen to nothing. On the 25th October her Majesty had lost her last crown. The next day she ordered her treasurer to bring her her money for November, which was all absorbed a few days later. It is clear that the king disapproves of this state of things. The worst of it is, that the queen sits up late, and as long as this lasts the king will never adopt the custom of constantly sharing the couch of his august spouse. I have raised my voice loudly against the dangers of this coolness. . . ."

MARIA THERESA TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

"VIENNA, 5th December.

"I expect by every courier consolatory news, but none arrives. I hope you will have abominable weather, which will prevent the king from hunting and fatiguing himself, and that the queen does not play late at night. That would be very bad for your health and beauty; very bad as separating you from the king; very bad for the present and for the future. You do not do your duty towards your husband in not accommodating yourself to his tastes. If he is too kind, that does not excuse you, but renders your guilt greater, and your future makes me tremble. Do not deceive yourself—this gambling brings in its train very bad company and bad actions all the world over. This is a well-known fact. One becomes deeply attached to play by the desire to win, and one is always a dupe; one cannot win in the long run if one plays fairly. Therefore, my dear daughter, I beg of you to cure yourself of this fatal passion. No one can better counsel you, for I myself used to gamble. If I can obtain no satisfaction from you I shall have recourse to the king to save you from the greatest perils. I well know the consequences; you have lost much in the esteem of the public, especially abroad, and this is very painful to me, as I love you tenderly."

In reply to the above letter, Marie Antoinette

protested that the stories about her gambling had been greatly exaggerated.

The year 1777 closed, and still there was no prospect of Marie Antoinette giving an heir to the throne.

MARIA THERESA TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

“VIENNA, 5th January, 1778.

“The idea that a courier may bring me the news that you are *enceinte* sets me beside myself. At sixty years of age one has not long to wait, and my tenderness for you and even for the king makes me dote. How I fear this everlasting carnival, which throws so many obstacles in the way. Ought I not to declare war against this continual round of dissipation, which deprives us of what is essential. . . .”

And Maria Theresa went on to implore her daughter to take care of her health, and not to go to Paris of a night, leaving the king alone at Versailles. . . .

On the 30th December, 1777, Maximilian Joseph, Elector of Bavaria, died without leaving any direct heir; and early in January, 1778, the Austrian troops took possession of a portion of the country upon which the emperor had more or less valid claims. Maria Theresa was at once thrown into the greatest state of alarm. She had wished to see diplomacy set in motion instead of troops. She was as much opposed to the dismemberment of Bavaria as she had been to that of Poland. She knew that the aggrandisement of Austria would be opposed by the King of Prussia, and she feared the effect by the insinuations of that perfidious monarch on the French government. The apprehensions of the empress were perfectly justified.

On the 17th January, 1778, Mercy wrote to Maria Theresa a long report, in which he said—"I was ill when the news of the death of the Elector of Bavaria arrived. This event excited at first a general cry in favour of war, and the mad-caps of Paris were already preparing to take the field." Kaunitz was convinced, however, that France, on the brink of a naval war with England, would not interfere. Prussia, he thought, might object, but Frederick the Great was old and ill, and the general report was that he was dying, and that he had fought his last fight. Maria Theresa, who had two sons and a son-in-law in the army, and was not at all convinced of the justice of the claims set up by Austria, was far more timid and circumspect. She apprehended danger from France as well as from Prussia, and she appealed with warmth and vigour to her daughter to aid her House at the present juncture; it would be a death-blow to her were the alliance between the two countries to be broken.

It was soon known that Prussia intended to resist the pretensions of Austria, and that Frederick was preparing to march an army to the threatened quarter. He hated war, but he would not stand by and see Bavaria dismembered, even if the heir to Bavaria should consent to cede his rights to Austria.

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

"18th February.

" . . . I found the queen more uneasy and anxious than I had ever seen her. Having spoken to her husband in a very pressing way on the Bavarian affair, the intrigues of the King of Prussia,

and the danger of a coolness between France and Austria, the king replied—‘It is the ambition of your parents which is about to upset everything; they began with Poland, and Bavaria makes the second tome. I am sorry for it for your sake.’ ‘But,’ replied the queen, ‘you cannot deny, Sire, that you were informed of the agreement entered into with Bavaria.’ ‘I was so little aware of it,’ answered the king, ‘that orders have just been given to all the French ambassadors to make known to the different courts that the dismemberment of Bavaria is being accomplished against our will, and that we disapprove of it.’ I did not think it expedient to mention in my last despatch that I have the above information from the queen herself.”

MARIA THERESA TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

“VIENNA, 19th February.

“It is at 5 a.m., in great haste, with the courier at the door, that I write to you. His departure is advanced in order to meet at once the blackest and most malicious insinuations of the King of Prussia, hoping that if the king (Louis XVI.) is informed of the truth, he will not allow himself to be influenced by wicked persons, and counting upon his justice and his tenderness for his dear little wife. . . . Never was it of greater importance to stand firmly together; the whole system depends upon it. You may judge how this affects me! The interest of our two Houses, that of our States, and even of Europe depends upon it. Let nothing be done in a hurry; let time be gained, so that we may avoid a war, which once commenced may last long, and have most disastrous consequences for all concerned. Imagine my private sorrow; the emperor and your brother (Maximilian) and Prince Albert will be the first actors; this idea alone almost kills one; but I can do nothing to hinder it,”—the emperor and Kaunitz insisting upon war, for the moment,—“and if I do not die, my life will be worse than death. I embrace you.”

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

“VIENNA, 3rd March.

“You know how much it costs me to enter into this Bavarian affair, so contrary to my way of thinking. . . . I recommend you to employ all your zeal and all your dexterity to maintain the alliance with France, already shaken by the insidious insinuations

of the King of Prussia, and by our own acts. The dissolution of this alliance would put an end to my unfortunate existence.

“What preoccupies me most under these critical circumstances is the situation of my daughter. I am persuaded of her attachment to her family, and her desire to furnish proofs thereof, as far as her giddiness will allow her to indulge in serious reflection; but she must act with prudence and sagacity. . . .”

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

“VERSAILLES, 18th March.

“ . . . I had a long conversation yesterday with Mercy, who appeared to be satisfied with the interview he had just had with ministers; as for me, I am well pleased with the king, who sincerely wishes to maintain the alliance. He informed Monsieur de Goltz that he did not wish to meddle with the affairs of his master. The king has caused the King of England to be informed that he has concluded a treaty with the Americans. On Sunday Lord Stormont received orders to leave the French Court. There is every appearance of our marine, upon which they have been busy for a long time, being soon actively engaged. God grant that all these movements may not bring about a war by land!”¹

¹ On the 10th March, or a week before Marie Antoinette wrote the above letter, the Baron de Breteuil, the French ambassador at Vienna, was told to inform the Austrian government that France intended to remain neutral—“an attentive and scrupulous examination of the engagements of the alliance with Austria showing—

“1st, That the possessions guaranteed by the alliance were not in dispute, &c.

“2nd, That the war had for object acquisitions and titles which were quite unknown when the alliance was concluded. . . .

“3rd, . . . That the King of France never looked upon the conclusion of the alliance as a means of aggrandizement.

“4th, That France could not without loss of dignity and breach of engagements violate the treaty of Westphalia.”

It was for these reasons that the French government, to the great indignation of Austria, and in spite of the entreaties of Marie Antoinette, refused to cast its sword into the scale.

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

"VERSAILLES, 19th April.

"My first impulse, and I regret that I did not follow it, was to inform my dear mother a week ago of my hopes. I was arrested by the fear of causing you sorrow should my great hopes evaporate; they are not yet entirely certain. . . . I have interrupted all carriage exercise, and confine myself to short walks. . . ."

After referring in the above cautious manner to the fact that she was *enceinte* at last, Marie Antoinette plunged into politics, writing—

"After having spoken to Mercy about the bad state of affairs, I sent for Monsieur de Maurepas and Monsieur de Vergennes. I spoke to them strongly, and I fancy that I made an impression, especially on the latter. I was not satisfied with the reasoning of those gentlemen, who wish to gain over the king. I intend to speak to them again, perhaps even in the presence of the king. It is cruel, in an affair of such importance, to have to deal with persons who are not straightforward. . . . Yesterday, in coming from vespers, I was a little sick in the stomach, which augments my hopes. I should be too happy if affairs could be settled, and I could be delivered from all the alarms and misfortunes which threaten. I cannot think of them without a shudder, especially as concerns my dear mother, whose heart is so good and so kind, and who deserves to be happy, having made every one around her happy."

MARIA THERESA TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

"SCHÖNBRUNN, 2nd May.

"The courier of the 13th ult. brought me the consolation I stand so much in need of at present. You announce a great, but not an unexpected piece of news; let God be praised, and may my very dear Antoinette be strengthened in her brilliant position by giving heirs to France. No precaution is too great. I am delighted that you no longer go to Paris of a night, and that you have even given up playing at billiards."

Then come all kinds of maternal recommendations of an intimate description, political appreciations, and such exclamations as these—

“Ah! if you could only see the joy which the great news has caused at Vienna. . . . Every one takes an interest in you; every one prays; but in case our hopes are not fulfilled, there is nothing lost. It is sufficient that there is a possibility, and God will give you His blessing, and also bless that wise and virtuous king, my dear son.”

On the same day, in a letter to Mercy, the empress said—

“No matter how flattering the news that my daughter is *enceinte*, I must admit that I shall feel inclined to doubt it until a child be born, so incredulous have I become in this matter, and so often have my hopes been deceived. . . . [I should be much more uneasy, if I did not know you to be with my daughter, concerning the consequences of her being in the family way, and the future of the infant. I hope that all due precautions will be taken in the choice of a governess and under-governess, not of the Piedmontese set, which I greatly dread].”

Not only was Mercy able on the 5th May to confirm the fact of the queen being *enceinte*, and that the king was enchanted, but on the 4th May Louis XVI. wrote as follows to the empress—

“Madame, my sister and mother-in-law, it is with the greatest pleasure that I announce to your Majesty the happy event which has taken place. . . . The queen is quite well up to the present, and I hope that in the month of December I shall be able to inform you of the birth of a grandson.”

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

“VERSAILLES, 16th May.

“ . . . My health continues to be good. This morning I saw my *accoucheur* (it is Vermond, a brother of the abbé). I feel more

confidence in him than in any one else. . . . I am glad that you are satisfied with the way in which I have managed affairs. Alas ! I do not deserve your praise, as I have only acted after the dictates of my heart. What afflicts me is, that I cannot persuade all these ministers how just and reasonable are the demands made by Vienna ; but, unfortunately, there are no people more deaf than those who will not hear. I intend speaking to both of them in presence of the king, to force them at least to speak in a suitable manner to the King of Prussia ; and, in fact, it is the prosperity and the glory of the king (Louis XVI.) that I desire, for he can only gain by supporting allies who ought to be dear to him in every way. He behaves to me in the most perfect manner, seeing my position, and he is most attentive. I acknowledge, my dear mother, that my heart is broken at the idea that you for a moment suspected him as responsible for what is passing ; no, it is the fearful feebleness of ministers and the great want of confidence which he has in himself which is the cause of all the evil, and I am sure that if ever he consults himself alone, you will see that he is straightforward and just. . . .”

MARIA THERESA TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

“SCHÖNBRUNN, 17th May.

“The consolation afforded to me by your interesting position overwhelms me with joy. I cannot sufficiently thank God for having granted me the favour of seeing my dear daughter more solidly established for the future. All my wishes with respect to my family are accomplished, and I can close my eyes in peace. I must admit that I had your situation more at heart than was apparent, loving you so tenderly. Mercy has written to tell us of the obliging and tender manner in which you have employed yourself in behalf of your family and your country. . . . France has nothing to fear from us, we have no desire to diminish her influence ; we are too intimately allied to her by heart and family not to enter into her views, except as regard a *liaison* with Prussia. . . . There is no depending on the word of the King of Prussia. France has experienced this upon several occasions, and no prince in Europe has escaped his perfidies ! and it is he who sets himself up as dictator and protector of all Germany ! and the great Powers will not act together to hinder such a misfortune, which will fall sooner or later upon all of us ! For the last thirty-seven years he has been the

curse of Europe by his despotism, violence, &c. . . . The future has not a smiling aspect; I shall not be alive, but my dear children and grandchildren and our holy religion will feel all this. If he is allowed to gain ground, what a prospect for those who will come after us! This will go on increasing. I should like at the sacrifice of my days to render our children more happy and more tranquil than we have been, especially since I have the hope of seeing a dauphin, my grandson."

While these letters were being exchanged—that is to say, between January and April—there had been much mutual recrimination, appealing, and preparation for war on the part of Austria and Prussia; but at length Frederick the Great, seeing that Austria was determined to have Bavaria, which she had long coveted, held a review at Berlin, and addressed his troops in such language as this—"Gentlemen, I have assembled you here for a public object. Most of you, like myself, have served together, and have grown gray in the service of our country. I have no doubt that you all, as well as myself, have a horror of bloodshed; but the danger which now threatens our countries not only renders it a duty, but makes it an absolute necessity to adopt the quickest and most effectual means for dissipating the storm with which we are threatened." After expressing confidence in his army, the king said that he could no longer ride at the head of his columns on the march, and that he should be obliged, except on the day of battle, to make use of a post-chaise.

When Kaunitz perceived that Frederick was terribly in earnest, and ready and able to strike, his tone

changed from that of defiance to supplication, and he asked if there existed no means of settling matters without the two great Courts coming to blows. The Emperor Joseph also wrote a letter to the King of Prussia in a similar strain, and proposed a conference at Berlin. To this letter Frederick the Great replied on the 14th April, "with probity and frankness, as became an old soldier." He said that he wished to maintain peace and harmony between the powers of Europe, but there were limits to everything. As a member of the German empire, he felt bound to support the immunities, liberties, and rights of the Germanic body, which he could not basely sacrifice. He consented to the proposed congress, which sat through May and June, and was unable to come to any arrangement.

On the 3rd July, "as Austria would listen to nothing but war," Frederick declared war, and at once set 100,000 men in motion.

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

"7th July.

"War has been declared; this is what I dreaded ever since January; and what a war! where there is nothing to gain and everything to lose. The King of Prussia has entered Nachod in force; he is going to surround us, having 40,000 men more than we have. You may imagine how this has affected me! God grant that this war may end in the same way that I foresaw its commencement! (*sic*). It is certain that France has done us much damage with her coquetting with the King of Prussia. . . ."

After many months spent in negotiation, with sword drawn, the King of Prussia had at last lost patience

and entered Bohemia. The news that he had occupied Nachod created quite a panic at Vienna, and great was the anguish of Maria Theresa, who saw all her dreams of happiness suddenly vanish. She appealed for aid to her daughter and to her faithful ambassador; they might yet persuade France to interfere with the King of Prussia. We find Mercy blaming the conduct of the queen, who, instead of making a friend of Maurepas, was always willing to lend a ready ear to the partisans of the Duc de Choiseul; and Maurepas could twist the king round with his little finger. The queen wept, and countermanded a *fête* to be given at the Trianon, and the king had some difficulty in drying the eyes of her Majesty.

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

"PARIS, 17th July.

" The queen afterwards asked me under what form she ought to render an account to your Majesty of her last conversations with the king. I advised her to relate matters exactly as they happened. Upon this the queen declared that it was repugnant to her feelings to allow your Majesty to see to what a point the king allowed himself to be governed by his principal minister, and that it would grieve her to speak of this weakness of her august spouse. . . ."

Despairing of success, Maria Theresa determined to write to Frederick herself, and on the 13th July she despatched Baron Thugut to the king's camp with propositions for a settlement. The empress said nothing to Joseph II. of the step she had taken, knowing that he would disapprove of it, until the baron had left Vienna. She then wrote to her son, saying—

“ Having commenced this work, I shall finish it, ‘ according to my head,’ for it concerns you and the empire. . . . My old gray head can support all the responsibility. . . . ”

Writing on the 31st July to Mercy the empress said—

“ Of a truth I am accustomed to be always contradicted, and nothing that I propose is ever accepted. I did not take this step on my own responsibility (*de ma tête seule*). Kaunitz proposed it in order to console me, and I would have thrown myself at the feet of the King of Prussia to have obtained peace.”

We see here to what a terrible state of mind the empress must have been reduced when she could thus write of the bitter enemy of her House—

MARIA THERESA TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

“ SCHÖNBRUNN, 6th August.

“ Mercy has been directed to inform you of my cruel situation as sovereign and as mother. Wishing to save my States from the most cruel devastation, I must, at no matter what cost, try and get out of this war; as mother, I have three sons who not only run the greatest danger, but who must fall victims to the terrible fatigues to which they are not accustomed. In making peace at the present moment I not alone draw down upon myself the accusation of great pusillanimity, but I render the King of Prussia still greater; and the remedy must be prompt. I acknowledge that my head swims, and that my heart has long been annihilated.”

The empress went on to say that the campaign had begun badly, that Prince Henry had entered Saxony in force, that Laudon had been obliged to retire, and that the situation was extremely delicate; and she added—

“ I recommend you to support Mercy in order to save your House and your brothers. I shall never ask the king (Louis XVI.) to do

anything which can drag him into this unfortunate war, but only to make a show, to assemble a few regiments, to name generals, and to come to our aid in the case of Hanover (*id est* England) joining our enemies."

Maria Theresa naturally concluded her letter by imploring her daughter to take care of her health, and regretting that all this pother should have arisen at so critical a moment. As to the propositions made by the empress, they were rejected by the King of Prussia.

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

"VERSAILLES, 14th August.

"I have passed a fortnight in the most cruel anxiety, not receiving any news. I imagined all sorts of horrors. The arrival of the couriers, so impatiently awaited, has augmented my alarm and the uncertainty which devours me. But how think of my own misfortunes when my dear mother is in so fearful a situation!

"I made up my mind yesterday to persuade the king to offer his mediation. In order to decide him, I preferred going to find him when I knew him to be with Monsieur de Maurepas and Monsieur de Vergennes. We had just entered upon the affair, and the king already appeared well-disposed, when the despatches from the Baron de Breteuil arrived. . . ."

However, matters soon wore a more favourable aspect, for the queen added—

"Things have changed, and the King of Prussia, if he refuses to consent to peace, in spite of the propositions of my dear mother, will place himself in the wrong."

And, in fact, the French Government, on learning that the propositions of the empress, after a short examination at Braunau, had been rejected, sent a long despatch to its *charge d'affaires* at Berlin, dated 20th August, remonstrating with the King of Prussia.

“ Her Imperial Majesty,” said the despatch, “ offers to renounce for ever her claims on a portion of Bavaria if the King of Prussia will renounce his claims on the margravates of Anspach and Bayreuth. . . . The king has never flattered the Court of Vienna as regards the consequences of its enterprise in Bavaria. He never permitted himself to judge of the rights of the case ; but, faithful to the duties of friendship and alliance, he warned his ally against the danger of a too seductive opportunity, and recommended moderation and disinterestedness. The king does not think that the propositions of the empress are due to his advice. All the honour of the step belongs to that august princess, her profound wisdom, and her love of humanity. By her generous renunciation, her Imperial Majesty removes all motives for war ; she calms uneasiness and dissipates the distrust of Germany, which can no longer consider its privileges, liberties, and rights violated or menaced.”

Frederick refused to consider his claims on Franconia and the Austrian claims on Bavaria as bearing any resemblance to each other, and military operations, confined to marching up and down hill and to a few skirmishes, continued.

In concluding her letter to her mother, the queen informed the empress that her health was good, and that her child had stirred for the first time at 10.30 p.m. on the 31st July. “ Since then it frequently stirs, and I cannot tell you, my dear mother, how each movement fills me with joy.”

MARIA THERESA TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

"SCHÖNBRUNN, 23rd August.

" . . . I was afraid that my negotiation would break down. . . . Mercy will tell you about our ulterior plans. In the meantime Bohemia is being most cruelly ravaged, and if the junction of the two armies"—those of Frederick and Prince Henry, between which Laudon was lying—"takes place, there will be a great battle, which will decide all, and will render thousands of persons miserable, and perhaps our own family. This perspective is very painful, and I would have attempted the impossible to avoid it"—then why have dragged Anspach and Bayreuth into the question?—"The step which I took in writing to that cruel enemy cost me a great deal. My dear daughter, it is no longer a question of jealousy between two monarchies, but a question of remaining solidly attached to each other, and of giving no one the hope of being able to separate us. We are bound so closely together by blood"—Austria, France, and Naples.—"Our interests are the same, and our religion; but unless we show a firm front we shall be toppled over one after the other. . . ."

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

"19th September.

"During the visit to Choisy, it was remarked with surprise that the king for the first time played at faro. It was one of the greatest marks of complaisance that he could give his august spouse, and there is no fear of this *début* becoming a habit. It would be dangerous and damaging, for the king is not a *beau joueur*"—cannot stand losing—"and his impatience would produce a disagreeable exhibition of temper. The queen admits this, and I hope it will prove an extra inducement to her to renounce high play.¹ . . ."

On the 17th November Mercy, referring again to this subject, wrote to the empress, saying—

¹ In Bachaumont we find—

"9th November.—For the first time in his life Louis XVI. played a game of chance and lost heavily, considering the sums he staked. He seems to have taken a taste for *lansquenet*. It is a pity to see him quitting the path of austere wisdom."

“During the last week at Marly games of chance recommenced with great violence. The *salon* was opened to every one without distinction; some swindlers managed to get in, and one of them was caught giving the banker a *rouleau* of counters instead of louis. These regrettable episodes excite public criticism, and produce a very bad effect. The queen had lost one thousand louis, but she managed to win back four hundred.”

In a note we find that several ladies of the Court were suspected of having played with false louis.¹

MARIE ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

“17th October.

“Your last letters have given me more pleasure than I had tasted for a long time. My dear mother begins to breathe again. As for the retreat of the King of Prussia”—who had eaten all the country round without attacking the Austrian position, and had been obliged to fall back—“it is an inestimable advantage, which ought to humiliate him, and to encourage every Austrian. The desire of my soul is that this terrible enemy may remain inactive, at least during the winter, and that his ill-success may lead to a reasonable peace. The weakness and vacillations of Monsieur de Maurepas grieve me. I have spoken to him several times very firmly; but I thought it my duty to restrain myself and not to break with him altogether, so as not to place the king in the embarrassing position of having to choose between his minister and his wife. I shall speak to him again on

¹ It was no doubt in allusion to this that Beaumarchais made Figaro in his celebrated monologue exclaim—“There remained nothing for me to do but to steal. I became a banker of faro; then, good people! I supped in town, and persons, called *comme il faut*, politely opened their doors to me, keeping for themselves three-quarters of the profits. I might have succeeded. I even began to understand that to gain a livelihood the *savoir faire* is better than the *savoir*. But as every one around me pillaged, while insisting that I should be honest, it was necessary to perish again.” What could Marie Antoinette have thought of this portion of the monologue when she had the *Mariage de Figaro* performed at the Trianon?

the first opportunity, so as to force him to keep the promise he made of writing to all the French ministers in Germany as he wrote to the ministers at Berlin. . . .”

The King of Prussia did remain inactive during the winter, and no battle was fought, Frederick the Great wishing to obtain his ends by gentle pressure and diplomacy in the shape of Russian intervention. In fact, in this month of September, Catherine II., irritated with the Court of Vienna, not only offered her mediation between Prussia and Austria, but moved a body of troops in the direction of the Galician frontier. This filled the soul of Maria Theresa with gall.

MARIA THERESA TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

“VIENNA, 2nd November.

“ . . . I render justice to your zeal and tenderness, and sometimes I even tremble lest you should go too far. . . . What a difference between the ally of the King of Prussia and ours. Not only does Russia, on every occasion, hold the same language as her ally, but her declaration, which is clear, places us in a very embarrassing situation. . . .”

On the same day the empress wrote to Mercy, saying—

“I feel deeply the interest which my daughter takes in our affairs. I hope, however, that she will not employ too much ardour, perhaps without any other effect than to render herself *importune* to the king, suspected by ministers, and odious to the nation. The situation of affairs has become much more delicate since the stiff declaration of Russia.”

We need say no more of this Bavarian affair. In consequence of Russian pressure and French desertion (as the empress called it), Austria was obliged to relinquish her claims, a Congress held at Teschen so

deciding. And this war, in which no battle was fought, cost Austria and Prussia between them £4,336,000 and 20,000 men.

Mercy kept his imperial mistress thoroughly informed respecting the position of the queen, and the preparations for her confinement; and he assured Maria Theresa that there was no reason to suspect an intrigue at Court, and no cause for anxiety. At last!

MERCY TO MARIA THERESA.

“VERSAILLES, 20th December, 12.45.

“I beg to announce most respectfully to your Majesty that the queen gave birth to a princess this morning at 11.30. . . . Her Majesty showed great courage; I saw that august princess a few moments before her confinement and a few instants afterwards. The effort she made to keep from crying out caused a slight convulsive movement of the nerves: it was deemed expedient to bleed her, and calm was at once restored. The queen is as well as can be expected, and her august infant is big and strong, and in excellent health. In the hurry of the moment I can add no more.”

On the 24th Mercy reported that everything was going on well, that the august infant had regular and charming features, large eyes, and an agreeably shaped mouth, and that the king was greatly taken up with the baby. Mercy had permission to see the august infant every day.

The convulsive movement he attributed to several causes. “1st, The stirring of too many persons present; 2nd, The efforts made by the queen not to cry out; 3rd, Because, not hearing her infant cry, she thought that it was dead; 4th, When the infant did cry, the sudden contrast between grief and joy.”

Mercy saw the convulsive movement, which nearly frightened him out of his life. He loudly praised the presence of mind of the accoucheur, who bled her Majesty in the foot. Mercy also reported that "during the time the queen was in labour, the Holy Sacrament, according to custom, was exposed in Paris, and the people flocked in crowds to the churches, and gave true marks of attachment to the queen. This attachment was shown tempered by a regret that her Majesty had not given birth to a dauphin."¹

There must be some letters from Maria Theresa missing here, for it was not until the 13th January, 1779, that Maria Theresa acknowledged the despatch of Mercy of the 29th December, but made no reference to that of the 20th, sent off in hot haste;² she

¹ According to Bachaumont the Parisians displayed their joy in a variety of ways. He wrote—

"24th December.—The French theatre gave a free performance yesterday in honour of the *ouverture du ventre de la Reine*. The fishmongers and the coal-heavers arrived late and were refused admittance, there being no room. They claimed the right of sitting in the royal boxes, which claim was not admitted. In the end, however, they were accommodated with seats on the stage, the coal-heavers sitting on the king's side, and the fishmongers on that of the queen. Before the performance began a coal-heaver read a paper which he held in his hand; this was a bulletin of the health of her Majesty, and gave rise to dances of joy and *propos* worthy of the interlocutors. At last the tragedy of *Zaire* commenced, was listened to in silence, and was highly appreciated."

² "10th November.—It is said that signals have been prepared, so that in three hours the result of the queen's confinement may be known at Vienna. These signals will be made by means of guns, if the wind permits, or else by fires lighted at certain points."—*Bachaumont*.

expressed herself deeply grateful to Vermond for having saved the life of her daughter, and said nothing of the sad disappointment caused by the birth of a princess instead of a prince."

Mercy continued to report in detail all that concerned mother and child. On the 23rd January the queen had so far recovered that a certain number of persons were admitted to her room, where a bank of *faro* was opened, but the play was not high. Although bodily exercise was necessary to the king's health, he never left the *château* for a week after the confinement of the queen. He was the first at her bedside in the morning, and passed his day running between her Majesty and the august infant, who received splendid presents from her godfather the King of Spain, and her godmother the Empress of Austria.

On the 25th January Mercy reported that the Abbé de Vermond, who had been charged to examine the queen's gambling account, found that in 1778 her Majesty lost 14,000 louis, and won 6500, net loss 7500 louis. "The queen," says Mercy, "was much struck by this, and assured the abbé and myself that she was determined to moderate that item of expenditure."

It was usual on the birth of a dauphin for the king and the queen to go in state to Notre Dame; but their Majesties now determined on treating Paris to a public entry in honour of the princess just born. We find that royalty was very coldly received, and this want of enthusiasm on the part of the people

was attributed to the distress which reigned in the capital. Maria Theresa, writing to Mercy on the 28th February, thought that it was due to the fact of sovereigns, contrary to ancient customs, appearing too often divested of regal pomp. In this same letter the empress said—"I am quite satisfied with your report as to what has passed since the *relevailles* of my daughter; but I shall not feel flattered if we have to wait for another eight years before my daughter becomes *enceinte* again." And on the 31st March, in a second letter, Maria Theresa repeated her apprehensions in these words—"What my daughter writes to me on the subject of her conjugal condition is not calculated to satisfy me; it makes me suppose that we shall have to wait eight years longer to see another child born."

On the 17th June the faithful Mercy, though his health had broken down, wrote a long despatch to Maria Theresa, describing an attempt made upon the virtue of the king, "who neither physically nor morally is inclined to indulge in gallantry." He had spoken to the queen on the subject, and had strongly advised her Majesty to keep her husband tied to her apron-strings. The queen appears to have been somewhat jealous. The ambassador related how he and the Abbé de Vermond had, after consulting together, come to the conclusion that her Majesty should try and discover who were the unworthy persons who were daring to attempt the perversion of the king, and to overwhelm them with ignominy and disgrace.

“The queen was much pleased with our advice,” said Mercy, who added—“*La reine s’est proposé, pour autant que cela dépend d’elle, qu’il ne se passera pas de semaine sans qu’elle ait des habitudes matrimoniales avec le roi.*” In a conversation which they had together on the 4th of this month, the king spoke to his august spouse in the most cordial and tender manner; he told her among other things that he loved her with all his heart, and he swore that he had never had the slightest inclination for any other woman. The queen paid great attention to this phrase, concluding that the king suspected that she was aware of the design to give him a mistress.

MARIA THERESA TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

“SCHÖNBRUNN, 1st August.

“Yours of the 16th much distressed me, seeing that all our fine hopes have vanished—hopes to which I had entirely abandoned myself. However, nothing is lost; as you are both young, in good health, and love each other tenderly, this will be repaired. Thank goodness that you have suffered no inconvenience. . . .”

From which we gather that Marie Antoinette was once more in a fair way to become a mother, when some untoward accident occurred. Alas! before it was repaired and a dauphin was born, poor Maria Theresa was in her grave.

MARIA ANTOINETTE TO MARIA THERESA.

“VERSAILLES, 16th August.

“ . . . My health is entirely restored. I am going to resume my ordinary way of living, and consequently trust soon to be able to announce new hopes of being *enceinte*. You may be perfectly tranquil as to my conduct. I feel the necessity of having children too

much to neglect anything. Formerly I was imprudent, through youth and giddiness, but now my head is set more firmly on my shoulders, and you may count upon it that I fully understand my duties. Besides, I owe this to the king for his tenderness, and, I dare add, his confidence in me, and I think that he will always remain the same as he is now. . . . I send, my dear mother, the portrait of my daughter; for some days past she says *papa*. She has not cut her teeth as yet, but we can feel them. I am very glad that she commenced by naming her father, as he will love her all the more. . . .”

MARIA THERESA TO MERCY.

“VIENNA, 31st July, 1780.

“It is fortunate that the health of my daughter continues to be good, in spite of the little care she takes of it. It is owing to dissipation that she thinks too little of giving a dauphin to France. If I reproach myself, on one hand, for having suspected the possibility of some criminal attempt on the confinement of my daughter, I believe on the other hand that there were grounds for suspicion, seeing the well-known character of a number of scoundrels in the nation and at Court.”

A few months after writing the above letter—29th November—the empress died, and in the course of the following year Marie Antoinette gave birth to a dauphin, to the great delight of the king and the nation. Bachaumont thus describes how matters passed on this occasion.

“26th October. . . . The Keeper of the Seals occupied his place at the foot of the bed on his knees. The king and the princes were within the screen round the bed, and the other courtiers outside. When the queen was confined the child was handed to the keeper of the seals to certify its sex. As a great silence reigned in the apartment, the queen thought she had given birth to a daughter; but as soon as she was in a condition to receive the news, the king advanced and said, ‘Madame, you have fulfilled my wishes and those of all France; you are the mother of a dauphin.’ . . .

The king was delighted, and repeated twenty times in an hour, 'Monsieur le Dauphin!'

And a little further on we read—

"6th November.—The ladies of the market had the honour of complimenting the king yesterday on the birth of the dauphin. The compliment ran thus—'Sire, if Heaven owed a son to a king who regards his people as his family, our prayers and our wishes have long demanded one; at length they have been answered. We are now sure that our children will be as happy as we are, for this child must resemble you. You will teach him, Sire, to be good and just like yourself. We will take care to teach ours how to love and respect their king.'"

How strange does this document appear when read by the light of subsequent events. The dauphin, born in 1781, did not live to suffer, like the rest of his family, under the Revolution; he died a natural death in 1789, and was succeeded by his infant brother, the Duke of Normandy, born in 1785. How, after the execution of his father and mother, this royal youth was done to death in the Temple is one of the saddest pages of French history.

We have now little more to add. Louis XVI., sur-named *le Désiré*, perished on the scaffold in spite of the eloquent pleading of Desèze, who said that "Louis, on ascending the throne at the age of twenty, brought to it justice, morality, and economy. . . . He was the constant friend of the people; they demanded that an obnoxious impost should be abolished, he abolished it. The people desired reforms, he accorded them; they wished to see the law changed, he consented; the people asked for liberty, he granted it."



LOUIS XVI. AND MARIE ANTOINETTE.

In fact, Louis XVI. did nothing but yield, and it cost him his throne and his head.

It has been remarked that during the eventful days which preceded the outburst of the Revolution, the queen alone of the royal family exhibited fortitude. Mirabeau declared her to be the only man of the family. She was at once the victim of the feebleness of her husband, the poltroonery of the *émigrés*, and the instructions of her mother. We have seen how on her arrival at Versailles she had been nicknamed *L'Autrichienne*. This epithet was afterwards applied to her by the mob, who were aware of the existence of an Austrian Committee at Court, and that the queen wished her husband to throw himself into the arms of the allies. Louis hesitated and was lost, and the queen soon afterwards shared his fate. It is lamentable to reflect upon the character of one of the documents which induced her judges to find her guilty of having conspired to introduce foreign troops into France. This was a letter written to her by Mercy Argenteau, in which he said that the allies would not act for nothing, and that before marching to the rescue of the French monarchy, the Kings of Spain and Sardinia and the German princes required the promise of certain territorial acquisitions. No one can deny that the conduct of the queen during the revolutionary ferment was noble and dignified, and redeemed all previous faults. When asked to point out those who had threatened and insulted her when the mob broke into the palace

of Versailles, she replied—"I am no informer; I saw all, I heard all, I have forgotten all." The people ill repaid this generosity. It has well been said that if the king displayed the courage of resignation, the queen displayed the courage of resistance; but when resistance was vain she displayed all the virtues of a wife and a mother, and ascended the scaffold with the serenity of a martyr.

Of the children of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette only one survived the Revolution—*Madame Royale*, as the Princesse Marie Thérèse was called. She too was confined in the Temple, and would no doubt have suffered a cruel and ignominious death had not the Austrian Government effected her delivery. When the Convention sent four of its members to arrest General Dumouriez at the head of his troops, the general handed them over to the Austrians and then deserted. To obtain the release of its delegates, the Convention consented to deliver up *Madame Royale*. An exchange was effected, and the princess obtained her liberty.

Madame Royale afterwards married the Duc d'Angoulême, second son of the Comte d'Artois (Charles X.), and returned to Paris with Louis XVIII. When Napoleon escaped from Elba and landed in France, the Duchesse d'Angoulême was at Bordeaux, where she behaved with so much courage that Napoleon said of her, as Mirabeau had said of her mother, that she was the only man of the family.

We have seen how the Comte de Provence, after-

wards Louis XVIII., in 1771 married a princess of the House of Savoy. She died at Hartwell in 1810, childless. Louis XVIII. belonged to the unimpassioned and lymphatic Bourbons. He had three favourites after the death of his wife—Madame de Balbi, Madame Princeteau, and Madame du Cayla, but they were favourites after the manner of the favourites of Louis XIII. In 1824 Louis XVIII. died, and was succeeded by his brother.

In 1773 the Comte d'Artois married Maria Theresa of Savoy, and had two sons, the Duc d'Angoulême and the Duc de Berri. The Comte d'Artois became King of France in 1824, and reigned as Charles X. until 1830, when he was driven into exile. He died at Goritz in 1836.

The Duc d'Angoulême, as we have seen, married his first cousin, *Madame Royale*, daughter of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette. When the Comte d'Artois succeeded to the throne he became dauphin; he shared the exile of his father, and died without coming to the throne. However, he is still spoken of by devout Royalists as Louis XIX., just as the dauphin of Louis XVI. is called Louis XVII., the little King of Rome Napoleon II., and the Comte de Chambord Henri V. The most notable event in the life of the Duc de Angoulême was his expedition to Spain. He commanded the French army which, after the Congress of Verona, crossed the Pyrenees and re-established that gloomy bigot, Ferdinand VII., on the throne. This was the last service which the elder

branch of the Bourbons of France was able to render to the Bourbons of Spain.

The Duc d'Angoulême died in 1844, and his wife in 1851.

The Duc de Berri, the second son of the Comte d'Artois, was married twice. When a refugee in England he married, in the year 1806, a very lovely young woman of the name of Amy Brown. Directly after his restoration, Louis XVIII., who disapproved of his nephew's marriage, had it annulled, although one of the first acts of his Majesty on returning to France was to abolish the law of divorce instituted by Napoleon. There can be no doubt that the marriage in question was perfectly legitimate as far as canon law was concerned, and yet Pius VII., who had obstinately refused to commit "so terrible a crime before the tribunal of the Almighty" as to dissolve a similar marriage between Prince Jerome Bonaparte and Betsy Patterson, invalidated the union between the Duc de Berri and Amy Brown after they had lived together for ten years. Now, according to canon law, in countries where the Council of Trent has not been promulgated, a marriage is considered valid even without the intervention of the parish priest, provided that there is mutual consent followed by cohabitation. It may be added that the Pope, on annulling the marriage of the Duc de Berri, insisted that his two daughters, born after wedlock, should be regarded as legitimate; and, in fact, canon law lays down that in such cases, where a marriage has been

contracted in good faith, the children shall incur no stigma.

On being released from his first marriage, the Duc de Berri married the grand-daughter of the King of Naples, who shortly afterwards gave birth to a princess. In 1820, as the duke was leaving the opera, he was stabbed by a fanatic called Louvel, who, to avenge Napoleon, had formed the project of slaying all the Bourbons. Great was the grief and consternation caused by this diabolical act, for the Duc de Berri was looked upon as the last hope of the elder branch of the Bourbons. It is true that he had a brother, but the Duc d'Angoulême, who had been married for many years, had no children. The Duchesse de Berri was with her husband when he was wounded; her anguish may be more easily imagined than described. The surgeons who had been summoned to attend the duke could do little for the dying man, whose couch was soon surrounded by all the members of his family. He asked to see his little daughter, then five months, of age, and Madame de Gontaut was sent to fetch the child. The Duchesse de Berri presented her to her husband, who, taking the infant in his arms and kissing it, said, "May you be happier than the rest of the family." Shortly afterwards the duke, turning to his wife, said, "My dear Caroline, if you will consent, I should like to see my little girls, Charlotte and Louise." The duchess at once sent for the daughters of Madame Brown, who arrived just in time to receive the last counsels and the blessing of their

father, who spoke to them in English. He then asked his wife if she would be good enough to look after the two orphans. She replied by taking them in her arms, and promising to be the best of mothers to them. The duke afterwards implored his wife to moderate her grief. "Remember, dear Caroline," he said, "the child which you bear in your bosom, and for its sake take care of yourself;" and thus was given the first notification that the Duchesse de Berri was *enceinte*. When all was over, the king had the greatest difficulty in tearing away the duchess from the remains of her husband.

Louis XVIII. afterwards created Charlotte, the daughter of the Duc de Berri and Madame Brown, Comtesse d'Issoudun, and she married the Prince de Faucigny-Lucinge in 1823. The second daughter, Louise, was created Comtesse de Vierzon, and she married the General de Charette, the nephew of the celebrated Vendean chief.

In 1876 Madame Brown died in France, and the certificate of her death contained the following particulars—"Amy Brown, aged ninety-three years, born at Maidstone, in the county of Kent, England, proprietor of the Château de la Contrie, daughter of the defunct Joseph Brown and Mary Anne Deacon, *widow of Charles Ferdinand*,¹ died on the 6th May, 1876."

On the 29th September, 1820, the Duchesse de Berri gave birth to a posthumous son, saluted by the Royalists as the child of a miracle, and who was first

¹ The Christian names of the Duc de Berri.

called the Duc de Bordeaux, and afterwards the Comte de Chambord, the Château of Chambord having been purchased by the nation and presented to the royal infant.

It was in 1830 that Charles X. was driven from the throne. He and his son, Louis Antoine, Duc d'Angoulême, or dauphin, signed their abdication in favour of the Duc de Bordeaux, then ten years of age. When the necessity of taking this important step was being hurriedly discussed at Rambouillet, the little duke and his sister, seeing alarm and grief depicted upon every face, began to cry, and Charles X. had them removed into another room. There *Mademoiselle*, in order to amuse her brother, made a coach and horses out of some chairs, and the duke had just taken his seat on the box, when his governor, Monsieur de Damas, arrived to inform him that his grandfather (not having been able to render the French people happy) and his uncle had abdicated in his favour, and that he was about to reign as Henri V. When Monsieur de Damas had terminated his speech, *Monseigneur* got off the box, handed the reins to his sister, and said, "Papa, who is so good, has not been able to render France happy, and so they wish to make me king! What nonsense." Then, shrugging his shoulders, he added, "But, baron, what you tell me is impossible. Sister, let us go on playing." And the duke resumed his whip and his reins, and the baron withdrew.

The elder branch of the Bourbons was at last replaced by the House of Orleans, Louis Philippe being

called to the throne. When in exile he had married a most amiable and accomplished princess, Amelia, the second daughter of the King of Naples, who, a Bourbon herself, more than once attempted to reconcile the two branches of the family, and to effect a fusion.

In 1832 the Duchesse de Berri fomented an insurrection in the south of France in favour of her son, but she met with little support, Charette and the other Vendean chiefs being opposed to the movement. After hiding in various places, the duchesse was at last betrayed by one Simon Deutz, a Jew, who for so many pieces of silver revealed where she had taken refuge to Monsieur Thiers. The duchess was arrested and confined in the Castle of Blaye. There it was discovered that she was about to become a mother, and she was obliged to acknowledge that she had been secretly married to an Italian, one Lucchesi Palli. She was shortly afterwards released from prison, for she no longer enjoyed any political importance; she was deprived of the direction of her son's education, and retired into private life. She died in 1870.

In 1846 there were more Spanish marriages, which nearly led to war between France and England. The French Government wished a son of Louis Philippe to marry Queen Isabella, while the English Government, founding its objections on the Treaty of Utrecht, favoured the pretensions of the Duke of Coburg. After a sharp struggle, during which both Governments accused each other of ill faith, Queen Isabella

married her cousin, Don Francis d'Assise, while her sister, Marie Louise Ferdinande de Bourbon, married the Duc de Montpensier, a son of the French king. As it was well known that Don Francis was impotent, it was feared that there might be a new family compact, and that another French king might reign at Madrid. These apprehensions turned out to be groundless; the Orleanist branch of the Bourbons was turned out of France, and Queen Isabella had children. In 1868 Queen Isabella was driven from the throne, which was then claimed by the Duc de Montpensier, who wished to establish in Spain that constitutional system which had broken down under his father in France. His candidature met with hardly any support, and the throne was offered to and accepted by Prince Amadeus, the second son of Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy. When Amadeus resigned the crown in 1873, the Duc de Montpensier again claimed the throne, neither for himself nor his son, but for his nephew Alphonso, who was duly crowned King of Spain in 1875.

Queen Isabella, who had been residing in France on equally cordial terms with the empire and the Republic, was naturally allowed to return to her native land when her son ascended the throne.

The Duc de Montpensier had three sons, but only one, Antoine, survives; he had also four daughters. The eldest married the Comte de Paris in 1864, and the third daughter married Alphonso XII. in 1878, and died before the end of the year. Alphonso XII.

then married the archduchess Maria Christina. He died in 1885, leaving two daughters. A posthumous son, now Alphonso XIII., was born in 1886.

The Comte de Chambord in 1847 married the eldest daughter of the Duke of Modena, but, like many of his race, he had no children. When he died in 1883 the elder branch of the French Bourbons became extinct, and most of the French royalists now look upon Philippe VII. (the Comte de Paris) as the legitimate successor of Henri V. (the Comte de Chambord). However, there is a small party called *les blancs d'Espagne*—adherents of Don Carlos—who insist that the Spanish pretender is the head of the House of Bourbon, and is entitled to reign in France as Charles XI. and in Spain as Charles X. These fanatics equally ignore the Treaty of Utrecht, the renunciation of Philippe V., and the Pragmatic of 1830, which abolished the Salic law in Spain, and allowed Isabella II. to succeed her father to the detriment of her uncle, the father of the present Don Carlos, Duke of Madrid.

Don Carlos, as the following letter to the Prince de Valori shows, will himself be satisfied with the Spanish throne—

“VENISE, le 27 février, 1889.

“MON CHER VALORI,

“Je vous remercie de m'avoir envoyé votre écrit *les Héritiers de Henri V.* Avec un vif plaisir, j'ai lu cet écrit magistral. Il réduit en poudre des assertions erronées, il donne le coup de grâce à des arguments mis en réserve, au bénéfice de toutes les usurpations.

“Il n’est pas en Europe un politique, un diplomate, un homme de bon sens qui puisse considérer comme vivantes des renonciations mort-nées.

“Il n’est pas un patriote espagnol ou français qui puisse revendiquer des actes imposés par l’ennemi contre la grandeur de l’Espagne et de la France.

“Merci, mon cher prince, de la preuve d’affection que vous me donnez en vous chargeant de mes intérêts politiques en France. La haute confiance que je vous accorde vous donne autorité pour être un lien d’amitié, de paix et de concorde entre tous ceux qui, en France, m’ont témoigné leur dévouement.

“Aimant la France comme vous l’aimez, je suis touché de vous voir consacrer votre vie à la cause de celui qui est le chef de la race de vos rois, l’héritier légitime de Louis XIV. et de Philippe V., mais qui reste Espagnol.

“Un jour viendra qu’un prince de ma Maison saura réclamer les droits imprescriptibles que j’ai réservés solennellement, lorsque, en décembre 1887, j’ai répondu à l’adresse de MM. de Cathelineau, d’Andigné et du Bourg.

“Quant à moi, un contrat passé sur les champs de bataille, signé avec le sang des héros, contresigné par moi et mes aïeux, me lie à ma noble et bien-aimée Espagne.

“Votre bien affectionné,

“CARLOS.”

At one moment it seemed as if the Bourbons and the Bonapartes would have formed a matrimonial alliance, for Napoleon Bonaparte, when he first conceived the idea of divorcing Josephine, proposed marrying the daughter of the King of Spain, and of bestowing the hand of his brother Lucien’s daughter, Charlotte, on the Prince of Austria. However, when Charles IV. heard of the honour in store for him, he hastened to marry his daughter and the Prince, and thus foiled the schemes of Napoleon, who, instead of mingling his blood with that of the Bourbons, as he

had wished, drove them from their thrones, and sent Bonapartes to reign in Tuscany, Naples, and Spain, while he had himself crowned King of Italy at Milan. The nephew of the great Napoleon did form a matrimonial alliance with Spain, or rather Napoleon III. married a Spanish lady of high rank and great beauty.

The Duke of Orleans, the eldest son of Louis Philippe, was thrown from his carriage and killed in 1858. He left two sons, the Comte de Paris and the Duc de Chartres, mentioned above. There are four other sons of Louis Philippe still living, the Dukes of Nemours, Aumale, Montpensier, and the Prince de Joinville, and one daughter, the Princess Clementine, who married the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg Gotha in 1843.

As we write these lines the Comte de Paris, the real chief of the House of Bourbon, is living in exile at Sheen House, where his eldest son, the Duke of Orleans, has just been betrothed to his first cousin, the Princesse Marguerite, daughter of the Duc de Chartres, and where the Comte and the Comtesse have been celebrating their silver wedding.

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